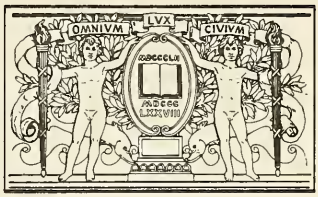
The House of May

A Family History

By WILLIAM ALLEN MAY



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The House of May

A Four-Century
Family History

(Revised and Abridged)

By WILLIAM ALLEN MAY

1984

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Preface

This is a family history. Mostly it is a patrilineal account . . . a father-son chronicle covering fourteen American generations in a time span of three hundred and fifty years.

It is the story of one branch of the May family. Insofar as I can determine, it has not previously been told because the existence of one of its patriarchs — Elijah May of Bristol County, born circa 1696 in the Colony of Massachusetts — was not reported in earlier publications of May genealogy.

Most of us know little about our forebears.

When my beloved "Grampa" May died at age 80 in 1925, none of his sons was certain about grandfather's place of birth. They knew he was a son of Joab May, but they knew little about Joab.

Fifty years after grandfather's death the questions still lingered. A search for answers became a time-consuming journey through hundreds of U. S. Census papers, land grants, church records, probate court documents, reports of town meetings, vital records of towns and states, history books, and numerous published and hand-written genealogies of related families found in the files of historical societies and state libraries.

It was not difficult to determine that grandfather was born in Springwater, New York, and that his father was Joab Y. May who was born in Strafford, Vermont. It did not take long to find proof that Joab was a son of Harvey May, who was a son of Hezekiah May, an officer in the Strafford militia during the American Revolution. The origin of Hezekiah, however, appeared to be an insolvable question. This obstacle was eventually overcome when a genealogist found the original will of Elisha May (1669-1744) in which he named elder sons Elisha and Elijah, whose births could not be found in vital records. However, there was a record of Elijah's marriage. Registration of Hezekiah's birth then was found in the vital records of Barrington, Rhode Island.

These discoveries made it possible to complete the ancestral chain — from the Immigrant Ancestor, John May (1590-1670), an English ship master who brought his family to the Colony of Massachusetts in 1640, down to present generations.

After Elisha May's will was found there followed two other discoveries which were exciting experiences for me. The first was the finding of the signature of John May in The Old School Book (1645-1780) of the Roxbury Latin School. This 121-page volume of records, including John May's pledge to support the establishment of a free school, is a historical treasure now protected in the vault of the Houghton Library at Harvard. The school still exists, the third oldest in the United States. It is in the Roxbury section of Boston.

The second event was learning of the burial place and the existence of the clearly legible gravestone of Elisha May, my first American-born ancestor. He was interred at Tyler Point Cemetery, Barrington, in 1744.

"The House of May" begins with the story of Captain John May and proceeds with a series of profiles of the descendants in my family line. Mostly they were ordinary, but courageous people who lived rather ordinary lives in times which were not always ordinary.

This was not intended to be a genealogy, as the purist in genealogical research would write it. All available vital data have been included, but I have sought to relate the story to the time in which these people lived -- and how they lived and died.

While I am proud of every one of them, I am reminded of an anonymous verse which John Franklin May included in his second edition of "Descendants of John May of Roxbury, Mass. 1640," published in 1978:

If you could only see your ancestors
All standing in a row,
There might be some of them perhaps,
You wouldn't care to know,
But here's another question which
Requires a different view;
If you could meet your ancestors,
Would they be proud of you?

I hope so!

-- William Allen May

LET US PRAISE OUR FATHERS

LET US NOW praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us.

The Lord hath wrought great glory by them through his great power from the beginning.

ALL THESE were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times.

There be of them, that have left a name behind them, that their praises might be reported.

AND SOME there be, which have no memorial; who are perished, as though they had never been; and are become as though they had never been born; and their children after them.

But these were merciful men, whose righteousness hath not been forgotten.

THEIR SEED shall remain for ever, and their glory shall not be blotted out.

Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for evermore.

--Ecclesiasticus 44:1-14
in the Apocrypha

Acknowledgement

It is unlikely this book could have been written without the assistance of several people whose manifest interest in history and genealogy was invaluable.

They generously and patiently devoted many hours to help me find answers to puzzling questions and to recover numerous hard-to-find vital records in New England, New York, Ontario and England and Ireland.

I do express my heartfelt thanks to these people:

Eva Jane Prior, Woodstock, Conn., registered genealogist.

Jean Hankins, Mansfield Center, Conn., registered genealogist.

E. Gwenda Smith, Strafford, Vt., president of Strafford Historical Society.

Carol R. Johnson, York, Pa., formerly Shrewsbury, Mass., full-time genealogist.

Reference librarians, Hackley Public Library, Muskegon, Mich.

John Franklin May, editor and publisher of the second edition of "Descendants of John May of Roxbury, Mass. 1640."

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Margaret M. Brown, Mayfield, County Sussex, England, Mayfield and Five Ashes Society.

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NORTH MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN

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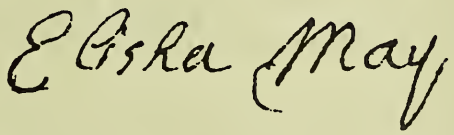
WOODSTOCK'S MAY LIBRARY

The May Memorial Library at East Woodstock was the gift of George Henry May of Lancaster, Massachusetts, in memory of his parents, William and Anna May, perpetuating the family name in Woodstock. It was dedicated in 1930. George Henry May, a chemist, was a ninth-generation descendant of John May of Roxbury, Hezekiah May's great-great-grandfather. William, who served in the 18th Connecticut Volunteers in the Civil War, was married to his cousin, Anna Maria May, also of Woodstock. When the war ended they moved to Dedham and William later became a prominent member of the Boston Chamber of Commerce.

(Photo by Eva Jane Prior)

PART 1

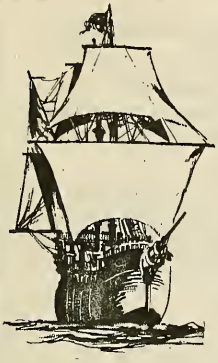
THE LINEAGE
AND THE LEGACY
OF THE PATRIARCH



of New Meadow Neck

1669 -- 1744

The First American-Born Ancestor in the Family
Which Is the Subject of This Narrative,
Elisha May Was One of the Founding Fathers
of Barrington, Rhode Island



1

The Lure: A Freer Life in New England

WHEN JOHN MAY first looked upon the shore of New England he had not come as an explorer and he had not come as a Puritan fleeing religious oppression in England. He came as a seaman.

As the master of the James, a brig of forty-four tons, sailing out of London, he fought the ferocity of the Atlantic more than once, bringing to America loads of passengers who sought fulfillment of the promise of a better, freer life in the New World.

Apart from religious persecution under King James I which caused many Britons to flee to Holland, thence to America, there was much in the reports from New England to inspire others to leave their crowded homeland and risk the perilous enterprises of life in New England.

In 1618 Captain John Smith reported that New England offered a great plenty of fish, that French and English explorers were trading off cheap articles to the Indians for valuable furs, and that timber for shipping was plentiful.

The Plymouth Colony was especially recommended for the profit in fishing.

King James made a grant of Nova Scotia (New Scotland) to Sir William Alexander in 1621. And Sir William in his "Encouragement to Colonies" in 1624 wrote of abundant resources for food in his northern colony. He told of "salmon and smelt in the great river; trout in every little brook; herrings, in a lake, easily taken, and, all the year over, shell-fish; such as lobsters, crabs, cockles, and mussels."

When William Wood returned to England in 1633 after a residence of four years in the Massachusetts Colony his descrip-

tion of the new country and of the success of the settlements was published in London. He encouraged emigration.

As spring approached in 1634 ten ships bound for New England were lying in the River Thames, at or near London, stopped until further order, by warrant issued by the Privy Council.

Masters of the vessels -- and that, of course, included John May of the James -- were called before the Privy Council and charged as to their duties. Each of them was required to give a bond of one hundred pounds conditioned that, if the voyage was to proceed, they would:

1. Prevent swearing among the passengers.
2. Require prayers from the Book of Common Prayer to be read in morning and evening.
3. Transport no passenger without a certificate of having taken the oaths of allegiance and supremacy.
4. Upon return, report the names of all passengers.

They were then permitted to sail.

The "Oath of Supremacie" which passengers were required to take was an acknowledgement that the King of England was the supreme head on earth of the church as well as of the state. Besides taking oaths at port, some of the passengers showed certificates from clergymen of their parishes, indicating their conformity to the orders and discipline of the Church of England.

It is difficult -- if not impossible -- to determine how many times John May and the James crossed the ocean. That task is complicated by the fact that there were two vessels sailing under the name James; and there may have been others. Then, too, many records of the ships were lost, or destroyed.

John May's first journey to Plymouth, where the Pilgrims had established a colony following their frightful voyage of 1620, probably was in 1623 when he was 33 years old. The memorandum of a descendant recorded that John Jenney, a brewer from Norwich who went to Holland and was married in Leyden, sailed for Plymouth Colony in 1623 on the brig James, of which John May was master.

His crossing in the summer of 1635 is well documented. The certificate, required for departure, was dated July 13. It said:

"The under written names are to be transported to N. England imbarqued in the James, Jno May Mr for N: E: p'r Cert: from the minister of their conformity in Religion and that they are no Subsedy men."

Signed were:

Wm Ballard husb:	32	Nic Buttry	33
Elizabeth Ballard	26	Martha Buttry	28
Hester Ballard	2	Grace Buttry	1
Jo: Ballard	1	Jo: Hart shoemaker	31
Alice Jones	26	Mary Hart	31
Eliza Goffe	26	Henry Tybbot shoe-	
Edmond Bridges	23	maker	39
Michell Milner	23	Elizabeth Tybbott	39
Tho: Terry	28	Jeremy Tybbott	4
Robert Terry	25	Samuell Tybbot	2
Rich. Terry	17	Remembrance Tybbott	28
Tho: Marshall	22	Nic. Goodhue cloth-	
Wm Hooper	18	worker	60
Edmond Johnson	23	Jane Goodhue	58
Samuel Bennet	24	John Johnson	26
Rich Palmer	29	Suzan Johnson	24
Anto Bessy	26	Eliza: Johnson	2
Edw: Gardner	25	Tho: Johnson mo	18
Wm Colbron	16	Ralph ffarman Bar-	
Henry Bull	25	ber	32
Salomon Martin	16	Alice ffarman	28
Wm Hill wheele		Mary ffarman	7
write	70	Tho ffarman	4
		Ralph ffarman	2

An earlier certificate, dated "19 Junij, 1635," listed seven passengers "Abord the James, Jo: May for N. England." Presumably making the voyage with the forty-three named on July 13, these were:

Tho: Ewer taylor	40	Sara Beale	28
Sara Ewer	28	Elizabeth Newman	24
Elizabeth Ewer	4	Jo: Skudder	16
Tho: Ewer	1½		

Although his name does not appear on either of the two certificates above, the Rev. William Leverich, a graduate of Cambridge College, England, was on the James. After stopping at various places, he finally settled at Newtown, Long Island.

The James received its passengers at London on July 22. The crossing required about seventy days, the James arriving in New England in October.

When he returned to London and reported the names of his passengers, John May also reported his own English parish was Mayfield in County Sussex and the town to which he went in New England was Plymouth.

Another, much larger ship named James also made the At-

EARLY MAP OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY AREA

This 1635 map of settlements on Massachusetts Bay shows Roxbury (at left, center), John May's choice for a home.

lantic crossing in 1635, in company with the ship Gabriel. The James of London was a ship of two hundred and twenty tons. Its master was William Cooper. This vessel sailed on June 4 with about one hundred passengers, called "honest people of Yorkshire." It arrived at Boston on August 16.

In most situations, life for the strangers arriving in the new world was filled with difficulties.

In his "Shipwrights, Fishermen, Passengers From England," Charles B. Moore wrote in 1879:

"The vessels and passengers of 1635 were very numerous. The arrivals exceeded the expectations of the previous settlers, and exceeded all preparations made for them or by them, either for food or house-room. Many circumstances combined to occasion this crowd, and, as a result, much suffering. There was not only no glass for windows, but no houses at all of any kind for the strangers, nor food for their hungry stomachs. The cold, much greater than in England farther north, was not anticipated; nor the hunger sufficiently estimated to be provided for or guarded against. Some of the vessels which brought passengers had not supplies sufficient to last their crews for the voyage back, and had the greatest difficulty to obtain them. The lives of many depended upon fish and fishermen. The grand difficulty was the want of sufficient food and covering to sustain life until many other things could be secured."

John May's brig was a small vessel, hardly worthy of being described as a ship. But it was strong and sturdy. Shipwrights took much pride in their work. The vessels they made were regarded as monuments unto themselves. They were framed so strongly that no tossing over the waves could break them up. The inexperienced voyager, about to embark on the long and hazardous crossing of the Atlantic, wanted assurances that strong timbers and braced frames would provide the safety he expected for his family and himself.

A ritual of orders was followed to get a ship under way in John May's time. "The Complaint of Scotland," which is supposed to date from 1548, describes the procedure. First, the anchor had to be raised and secured. After it was fixed in place the master would order: "Two men above to the foretop to cut the ribbons and let the foresail fall." Next came: "Haul out the bowline. Now hoist!" The seamen, to the companiment of a chanty, would then hoist the main yard and sheet home the mainsail.

After this came a flood of orders each given by the master and then relayed by the appropriate officer to the crew.

With a bit of imagination one might envision John May as

he got the James under way: "Make fast the halyards! Set your topsails! Haul your topsail sheets! Veer your lifters and your topsail braces! Hoist the topsail higher! Haul taut the topsail bowline! Hoist the mizzen and change it over to leeward! Sway the sheets and the belaying pins! Haul the braces to the yard!"

Then to the helmsman: "Mate, keep her full and by, a-luff . . . come no higher . . . hold your tiller steady as you are!"

Finally: "Boy to the top, shake out the flag on the topmast. Mariners, stand by your gear. Every quartermaster to his own station!"

With a good breeze behind, the ship would slowly make its way to sea . . . and the journey was under way.

This was the life of Captain May for ten years or more.

Then he made a long-considered decision of vital importance: He would resettle his family in America!

While it is not improbable that Captain May was the first of the English Mays to put foot on the soil of New Plymouth, he certainly was not the first of his name to visit the New World.

Henry May, "a worthy Mariner that went with Captaine Lancaster to the East-Indies 1591," wrote in his report, published in the collected papers of Captain John Smith, that he was "the first English-man" ever in the Bermudas. He reported he was "a stranger amongst fiftie and odde Frenchmen" who sailed from Laguna in Hispaniola on the last of November in 1591 and were "cast away upon the Northwest of the Bermudas" on December 17. He lived there five months. He departed on May 11, 1592, on an eighty-ton bark which the shipwrecked men built. They sailed to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, where he obtained passage to England, arriving at Falmouth in August, 1594.

Captain Smith's papers show that William May, a laborer, was one of a hundred and twenty from England aboard a supply ship which reached the Virginia plantations in 1608. The passengers included thirty-two "Gentlemen," twenty-one "labourers," nineteen of various trades, "and divers others to the number of 120."

The name of Cornelius May appears as one of a party visiting Kecoughtan on the James River when the governor, Sir Francis Wyatt, entertained Captain Nathaniel Butler during a brief stay at "James towne" in 1693. It is not clear as to whether Cornelius May was a colonist or a visitor.

2

Historic Mayfield, the Home John Left

IT MUST HAVE BEEN difficult for John May to forsake his English home at Mayfield, the small, historic village in The Weald -- the once forested area of Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

The year was 1640. The House of Stuart still held the throne. King James I, from whose reign the Separatists fled their homeland to seek greater religious freedom in Holland, had died in 1625 at 59 after a reign of twenty-two years. He was succeeded by Charles I, his only surviving son, who was to feel the executioner's ax in London in 1649 to end his twenty-four-year rule.

The persecution of James I and Charles I was surely well known by the master of The James; his seafaring career had brought him face to face with the freedom found in the New England of America.

Still, Mayfield, whose history dates to 838 A. D., is one of the prettiest villages in England. As do most of the towns in County Sussex it crowns a high hill which descends abruptly into deep valleys on the easterly side, sloping gradually on the western side.

Sussex -- most Britons agree -- is Britain at its finest. It is a county of soft meadow lands dotted with tidy villages of red-roofed houses. There are grazing sheep. There is a glorious summer sunshine that London never knows. It is a mecca for poets and painters and romantics.

Mayfield exemplifies the beauty of Sussex. Today, more than three centuries after John May decided to leave this village in which he and his wife were rearing their young sons -- a family started later in life than average -- Mayfield has retained much of the atmosphere of a traditional, medieval-appearing town. There are numerous timber and weatherboard houses, with red, ancient roofs.

Prominent in Mayfield is the square tower and the short, broad spire of St. Dunstan's Church. It stands on the site

ST. DUNSTAN'S CHURCH

of an older church which was destroyed by fire in 1389. That was the church beside which the saint to whom it was dedicated is said to have lived and where he made beautiful things of gold, silver or Sussex iron. This was an iron-working center of centuries past.

Saint Dunstan was the great man of Mayfield and has become part of its folklore. Legend has it that Saint Dunstan was working at his forge near the church in the Tenth Century when he was visited by the Devil, who appeared as a pretty maiden. Dunstan, however, saw the cloven hooves beneath the line of the dress. He clapped his red-hot tongs on the Devil's nose. Struggling free, the Devil fled, making a giant leap of nine miles to a spring where he cooled his nose. Thus the Devil gave Tunbridge Wells -- so the legend goes -- its medicinal waters which brought the town into existence. Visitors to the world-famous promenade known as The Pantiles may still sample the waters. The tongs with which Dunstan did the deed are preserved in the convent adjoining St. Dunstan's Church.

"It seems worse than frivolous of the Catholic Encyclopaedia to dismiss the episode as a legend and, as a crowning insult, to transfer the scene from Mayfield to Glastonbury," wrote Sheila Kaye-Smith in "Weald of Kent and Sussex." "It is true that Saint Dunstan was for a time an anchorite at Glastonbury, and there is no evidence of his having set foot in Mayfield until he became Archbishop of Canterbury. But Archbishops, we know, can be tempted of the Devil, and why should not one of them catch his nose in a pair of tongs? Besides, what about those tongs themselves? There they are for all to see -- not at Glastonbury, but at Mayfield."

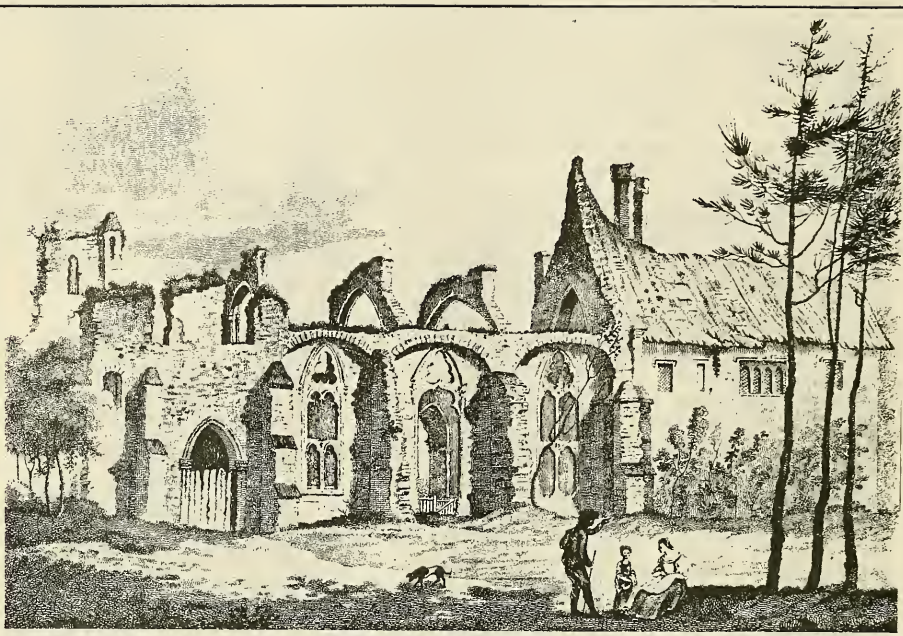
Inasmuch as the village was his home when he was not at sea, John May should have been no stranger to St. Dunstan's Church -- and he most likely was aware of the legend of the Devil's burning nose, whether or not it seems appropriate the flavor of the spring at Tunbridge Wells should possess curative values wrought by the evil one.

Again, quoting Sheila Kaye-Smith:

"Those tongs symbolize the fact that Saint Dunstan, like so many of the saints, was a citizen of two worlds and taught his people the arts of both. Besides being a great saint, who brought peace and order into the Church and Kingdom, he was also a great smith, who worked not only in iron but in gold. Some say that when the Devil approached him he was making a golden ornament for the altar of Mayfield Church."

The most interesting building in Mayfield today is the Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, where the tongs may be found. The structure contains the remains of the Old Palace, familiarly called Mayfield Place. Originally the Old Palace was not the property of the church, but was the private property of the Archbishops of Canterbury and used by them as their summer palace. After some centuries, and restored, it now is devoted again to the service of the Roman Church. Since 1976 it has been a Convent School, administered by the Sisters of the Holy Child. It is called Mayfield and St. Leonards School.

The Old Palace, in its time, was perhaps the most spectacular medieval hall in England. Saint Dunstan is said to have first built here an archi-episcopal palace; but no portion of the existing building is older than the Fourteenth Century. Archbishop Islip erected that portion of the building known as the Grand Hall, which dates from the middle of the Fourteenth Century. It is seventy feet long, thirty-nine feet wide and fifty feet high, and is accounted one of the finest in England. Once the Archbishops' dining hall, it is now the convent chapel. Much of the rest of the



MAYFIELD ABBEY
circa 1780

Painted by Paul Sandby, R.A.
Engraved by James Fittler

building is Victorian, but there are a Fifteenth Century gatehouse and wellhouse along the main street.

Mayfield long was a favorite residence for several of the Archbishops, some of whom ended their days in the mansion. Many courts were held here and causes heard and determined. In 1332 a provincial council was assembled and a constitution passed relating to holidays, their number and the observance of them. In 1362 another was held on the same subject.

Archbishop Cranmer surrendered the manor and mansion, with the park formerly attached to it, to King Henry VIII in 1545. In the same year King Henry granted it to Sir Edward North (chancellor of the court of Augmentations of the Crown) and Dame Alice, his wife. Two years later it was alienated to Sir Thomas Gresham, the favorite agent of the Crown in the reigns of Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth. By the will of Sir Thomas, dated July 5, 1597, it passed to Sir Henry Nevil, and male heirs of Elizabeth, his wife, daughter of Sir John

Gresham, brother of Sir Thomas.

Sir Henry Nevil, by indenture dated May 6, 1597, sold Mayfield Place for the sum of 6,387 pounds to Sir Thomas May of Burwash, father of Thomas May, the poet and historian of the Long Parliament.

Thomas May was born in Mayfield in 1595, five years after the birth of John May (of Roxbury), whose kinship to Sir Thomas, if any, remains undetermined. Thomas was educated at Sidney College in Cambridge and afterward was admitted a member of Gray's Inn, London. But "literature had more charms for him than law" and he attained eminence by his poems in both English and Latin, and by several dramas. Dr. Samuel Johnson, the critic, called him "the best Latin poet of England."

On account of "straitened circumstances," Thomas May and Dame Jane May, widow of Sir Thomas, by indenture dated November 17, 1617, conveyed the property to John Baker, Gentleman, on whose death it passed to his eldest son, John Baker.

Sale of Mayfield Place by Thomas May, said Lord Clarendon, "brought down his mind to his fortune by great modesty and humility in his nature, which was not affected."

Thomas May had much favor at the court of Charles I, who called him "his poet."

MAYFIELD PLACE, RESTORED

Thomas published the tragedies "Antigone" and "Agrippina" and the comedy "The Heir." At the command of King Charles I he produced seven books of poems on King Henry II and seven books on King Edward III.

When the civil war broke out, Thomas May took the side of Parliament. For this he was bitterly denounced by the royalists. Parliament made him its secretary and historian. In 1647 he published his "History of the Parliament of England Which Began November 3, 1640."

Thomas died suddenly in 1650. He received "a splendid public funeral, with a marble monument in Westminster Abbey"; but after the return of Charles II in 1660, ending the rule of Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth (1649-1660), the monument was destroyed and Thomas May's body was dug up and buried elsewhere.

The May Coat of Arms was granted to Sir Thomas May, in 1619. Edward May, Knight of Mayfield, second son of Sir Thomas also was granted the honor in 1640.

When the Rev. Joseph May of Philadelphia, in company with his cousin, John J. May of Boston, visited Mayfield in autumn, 1874, they sought with great effort to establish more concerning the genealogy of John May, born 1590.

The pastor wrote:

"Beginning with a date anterior to A. D. 1600, we examined them (parish registers) down to 1600, with minute care, to discover entries relating to our name. Of such we found about a dozen; of little distinct value, perhaps, but sufficient to show a somewhat numerous family scattered through several villages, Mayfield, Rotherfield (three miles west), Burwash (seven miles east), Wadhurst (about ten miles northeast), and the town of Lewes. The oldest entry noted was 'Jan. 11, 1601, Buried, Barbara, wife of Mr. May'. The next is '1601, Baptized, George May, son of Richard'. After this are 1604, 'Jan. 5th, Mtris (Mistress) Judith, dau. of Sir Thomas May, Knight'; and 'July 19, Martha, dau. of Sir Thomas May, Knight'. The following is perhaps the most interesting for our present purposes: '1606, Decr.--Jhon May, the son of Mr. Richard May, was baptyzed the same 14th day of Dece'ber, and was born the eighth'. Next comes '1607, August, Thomas May, the son of John May of Rotherfield, was baptyzed the 30th day of this August'. In 1608 a daughter, Mistress Ann, was born to Sir Thomas May, 'baptyzed,' and in February, 1609, buried. In 1616, 'July 24, Sir Thomas May, Knight,' was buried. In 1636, 'July 1, buryed, John Maye.'

"On the day following that of our visit at Mayfield, we

ARGOS HILL WINDMILL
A Landmark Overlooking the Parish of Mayfield

drove to Burwash. It is situated, like Mayfield, on a large hill, but can never have been so pretty or interesting a place. Here we found in the parish register, 'John May, & Mary Gutsoll, married at Burwash, Jan. 30, 1603.' This was, however, the only May item discovered, except '1597, July 3d, baptized, Edward, son of Mr. Thomas May.'"

The difficulty in obtaining definite information about the ancestry of John May of Roxbury stems largely from the fact that John May is such a common name in England. The John May married at Burwash in 1603 would not be John of Roxbury, who would have been only 12 or 13 years old at the time. The "John Maye" buried in 1636 might have been the John of Burwash or might have been the father of John May of Roxbury if, indeed, the father's name was John, something which is not known for certain. If John was the brother of Dorothy May, first wife of Governor William Bradford of Plymouth Colony -- a possibility which will be described in more detail later -- then his father was John May of King's Lynn who fled to Holland (but probably returned) and his grandfather was John May, Bishop of Carlisle.

An estate map existent in Mayfield, dated 1641 (one year after John moved to New England), shows two fields under the name John May. Was he John May of Roxbury, the map not yet reflecting his departure? Was he John's father -- who would have been at least 80 if he were the John May who was also the father of Dorothy? Was he the John May of Burwash, wed in 1603?

"The John May of the map may be an uncle, a cousin, or another family altogether, although it seems more likely he would be of the same family," said Margaret M. Brown, chairman of the Mayfield and Five Ashes Society and a shopkeeper in Mayfield, who has a copy of the 1641 map.

Regardless, those fields now comprise a portion of the Streel Farm, which is partly in Mayfield and partly in Rotherfield. From the spot one can just see the Mayfield church in the distance, a lovely view of the countryside. Records at the Streel Farm go back a little over a hundred years; so they shed no light on ownership in the Seventeenth Century.

The Streel Farm, it is believed by some in Mayfield, may at one time have been part of Abergavenny Estate.

It is likely that John May -- whichever John May it was -- was only a leaseholder of the fields shown in his name.

A question which the American visitors in 1874 sought to solve and were "obliged to leave unsettled" is that of the origin of the name of the village.

"Its form in monkish Latin was very pretty -- Magavelda,"

the Rev. Mr. May wrote. "It is sometimes written Maighfield in the old documents. Whether it has any connection with our patronymic cannot perhaps be now ascertained, although this remains not improbable."

People of Mayfield who have made a study of its history contend the name has no relation to the May family. Opinions differ as to its origin, but the most respected sources say the name comes from chamomile, an aromatic plant native to Eurasia, perhaps the mayflower, and a clearing -- thence veld, or feld, or field. It would appear to be the most likely origin. One has to remember that the village has been there from early times and records can be traced to the Ninth Century. Whereas Sir Thomas May's association with Mayfield, by which name it already was known, commenced around 1590 and lasted about twenty to twenty-five years. There is no unusual evidence of noteworthy May families in the village in its earliest years.

Mayfield is a fascinating blend of that which is ancient with that which is modern. It is the world as John May knew it and it is the world of today.

A DAY AT THE FAIR IN MAYFIELD, MANY YEARS AGO

The United Reformed Church was built as a Congregational Church for the Wesleyans about 1850. In the foreground of the church there is a little memorial to the Sussex Martyrs. During the Marian persecutions four people were burned at the stake for their Protestant principles. Fifty feet south of the road in which the church stands, in a field now built over, is the spot where the burnings occurred -- on September 23, 1556. On June 22, 1557, five more people of Mayfield were burned in the village of Lewes for the same reason.

Every year of even number the Mayfield Festival is held -- and it is no coincidence that it is held in the middle of May. "Celebration, merry making, periodic musical performances" are the secondary definitions given by the Oxford Dictionary for Festival; the primary definition is "Festival Day."

Another point of interest in modern Mayfield is Mayfield College, a large school for boys. It stands on the hill,

MODERN MAYFIELD WITH THE SPIRE OF ST. DUNSTAN'S CHURCH TOWERING BEHIND THE SHOPS ON HIGH STREET

just outside the village. It is run by the Xavarian Brothers.

Sussex is still a great county for "bonfires" and every village has its Bonfire Committee. Mayfield's Bonfire Society is one of the oldest in Sussex. Every autumn it provides a spectacular show, raising money to pay for a party at Christmastime for the senior citizens with half of the funds, the other half going to charity -- the blind, hospitals, children's home, and other deserving projects.

About fifteen miles southeast of Mayfield is the town of Battle where the Battle of Hastings was fought in 1066 -- not in Hastings, six miles off. Part of an abbey that William the Conqueror built as a monument to himself overlooks the battleground where the Normans defeated the Saxons.

It is as true today as it was in 1874 when the Rev. Mr. May wrote:

"No descendant (of John May) could visit without delight the region where our ancestor was born."

Coventry K. D. Patmore, the Victorian poet and essayist, called Mayfield "the sweetest village in England."

"He was not far wrong," said Mrs. Brown of the Mayfield and Five Ashes Society. "That is why we organized the society: To preserve the character of the villages and the old houses."

The Foreword in the program for the Mayfield and Five Ashes Royal Silver Jubilee in 1977 (the Queen's Silver Jubilee) noted:

"The Battle of Britain was fought over the area in World War II. We are so grateful to those young men, who preserved this beautiful countryside.

"To the farmers who in spite of war, have cultivated our land, and allow us to walk through the fields, especially in spring -- to pick the primroses and bluebells.

"We can look to Burwash and the sea, over the Vale of Heathfield preserved as an area of outstanding beauty.

"What more can an Englishman want!"

Coat of Arms

May

ARMS: Gules, a fesse between eight billets or, four in chief and four in base.

CREST: Out of a ducal coronet or, a leopard's head gules.

MOTTO: Vigilo. (I Watch).

This Coat of Arms -- red and gold -- was granted to Sir Thomas May of Mayfield in 1619. Edward May, Knight, second son of Sir Thomas, also was granted a similar Coat of Arms in 1640.

Folsmab

3

Roxbury: John May's Choice for New Home

PLYMOUTH COLONY was barely twenty years old when John May brought his family to America for resettlement in New England. Unlike most of the increasing tide of immigrants, however, he had solid knowledge of both the promises and the problems the newcomers faced. His previous Atlantic crossings had provided him with wisdom concerning settlement in the New World. What good fortune his experience as a ship's master had become! He had been able to see the settlements before making his decision to leave England. He was able to plan with care . . . to consider where he wanted to establish his new home . . . and what would be needed to make comfortable a home in this New England.

He was 50 years of age. He had a wife and two sons, John and Samuel. John was the elder at age 9.

Perhaps he was tired of a seafaring life. Perhaps he felt a longing to spend more time with his family than he could as a seaman. Perhaps his exposure to New England swayed him enough to conclude that emigration from his native land would mean a more promising future for his sons. Perhaps it was the beauty, even the wilderness of the Massachusetts Bay Colony; and the availability of low-cost land. Perhaps it was the freedom from oppression, sought by so many who already had left England, which also lured him to the new settlement. Perhaps it was all of these things in importance of varying degree.

Whatever was his thinking, John May crossed the Atlantic for the last time in 1640. He established his new home in Roxbury, a small, lovely, growing community which had been founded ten years earlier.

Actually the Pilgrims, or Separatists, had settled on land to which they had no right. They had obtained a grant in 1619 to settle on the James River in Virginia. That was the expected destination for which they set out on the Mayflower

in 1620. They were driven off course by storms. The small ship cast its anchor off the shore of Cape Cod on a gray, cold day in November.

While their ship was still anchored in Provincetown harbor, the Pilgrims drew up the Mayflower Compact. This agreement, based on Calvinistic principles, required all to abide by the will of the majority. Thus, a pattern of democracy was established for the first Massachusetts colony. They began to erect their first common house for themselves and their goods on the day after Christmas, 1620.

Within a short time the Pilgrims paid in full the London financiers who had backed them. They demonstrated that a colony in the New World could be self-supporting. They encouraged others to follow their experiment.

In the following decade a number of small settlements were founded along the Massachusetts coast in the vicinity of Plymouth. One of the most noted of these was one established in 1622 by Thomas Weston, a London merchant who had helped the Pilgrims, at Wessagusset -- now Weymouth.

If John May's first voyage to Plymouth was in 1623, as has been claimed, he arrived in the summer following the founding of Weymouth, which in ten or so years following that date was the destination of many Londoners.

The settlement of New England was almost entirely due to the antagonism between Protestant dissenters and the Church of England. The dissenters were of two kinds: the Separatists (Pilgrims) and the Puritans. The Pilgrims, who had fled England for exile in Holland, denounced the established Church of England as an idolatrous institution, false to Christianity and truth. The Puritans, taught the necessity of more complete and personal regeneration, sought a reform in the church, not a schism. However, purity of religion and civil liberty were the objectives of both Separatist and Puritan.

One might expect that John May, being a seaman, would have chosen for his new home a piece of land on the coast. But, instead, he selected Roxbury -- also called Rocksbury -- which was two miles from the new village of Boston.

There is little doubt that Roxbury was originally settled by some of John Winthrop's Puritans as early as the first week of July in 1630. John, the son of Griffin Craft, born July 10, 1630, was the first entry in the Town Book.

William Pynchon is described as "the principal founder of the town of Rocksbury." Under his leadership, the first comers to Roxbury settled mainly in the easterly part of the town, next to Boston. Gradually they extended the settle-

ment, notwithstanding the Enactment of 1635, designed as a protection against Indians, that no person should live beyond a half mile of the meeting house.

Roxbury was the sixth town incorporated in Massachusetts. The first mention of the town occurs in records of the third Court of Assistants, held September 28, 1630, as one of the plantations on which a part of the general tax of fifty pounds was levied. That day has been fixed as the official date of its settlement.

Therefore, Roxbury was a 10-year-old settlement when John May and his family arrived.

In Roxbury is an area known to this day as Jamaica Plain. The legend is that its name was given it by men of the sea, who were drinkers of Jamaica rum. They drank their rum "straight" -- or, in another word, "plain." Hence, Jamaica Plain!

By coincidence or design, John May settled in Jamaica Plain, on an eighteen-acre tract of land along the scenic Stony Brook, which also was a source of good water. It is difficult to pinpoint the boundaries of his land on a map of modern Boston (Roxbury now being a part of the city of Boston). Comparison of old maps and new, however, makes it appear his Stony Brook (or Stony River) land falls within the area bounded by Boylston, School, and Washington streets and Glen Lane.

Francis S. Drake, writing "The Town of Roxbury" (1878), wrote:

"On the corner of Amory Street, near the railroad bridge, is the John Curtis house, an old, gambrel-roof dwelling of the last century. Back of it runs Stony Brook, lined with huge willows. This old house was bought in 1742 by Jeremiah Williams, blacksmith, brother of Col. Joseph and the father of Major Edward Payson Williams. An old mansion, once the residence of Mr. John Amory, now a public house, and styled the 'Amory Hotel,' is on our left as we approach 'Gamblin's End,' while on our right a new brick brewery seems sadly out of place in this sylvan retreat. Somewhere in this immediate vicinity was the house and fourteen rods of ground belonging to John May, or Mayes, as it was then written, the ancestor of the well-known family of that name. The book of 'Houses and Lands' describes it as 'a triangle abutting on R. Gamblin east, the highway northwest, and Thomas Bell's orchard southwest."

The history of Roxbury makes it obvious that the John May family enjoyed the companionship of good neighbors . . . and that they fulfilled their own role of being good neighbors. The colonists who came to Roxbury were mostly from London or its vicinity. A few were from western England. They were

people of substance. Many of them were farmers. They took to the soil immediately. They were enterprising people. They were industrious . . . and they were frugal.

The natural surface of Roxbury was uneven and rocky. This accounted for its name, which in some of the early records was written Rocksbury or Rocksborough. The soil was rich and productive.

By working the land and turning to his skills in carpentry work, John May, the former seaman, found life in Roxbury to be good and rewarding. He was a freeman in 1641.

Roxbury, as it was known by John May, was described by Edward Johnson in 1652, his writing told in Drake's "The Town of Roxbury":

> "Roxbury is situated between Boston and Dorchester, being well watered with coole and pleasant springs issuing forth the rocky hills, and with small freshets watering the vallies, of this fertill towne whose forme is somewhat like a wedge double pointed entering between the two fore named towns and filled with a very laborious people whose labors the Lord hath blessed that in the room of dismall swampes and tearing bushes, they have very goodly fruit trees, fruitful fields and gardens, their heard of cows, oxen, and other young cattell of that kind about 350, and dwelling houses neere upon 120. Their streets are large and some fayre houses, yet they have built their house for church assembly destitute and unbeautified with other buildings. The church of Christ here is increased to about 120 persons."

In size, Roxbury was about seven miles in length, but not more than two miles in breadth at the widest point. It contained somewhat more than seventy-one hundred acres.

Water came from the Muddy River, Stony, Smelt and Dorchester brooks, Jamaica and Muddy ponds, and numerous springs. Stony Brook, which crossed John May's homestead lot, had its rise in Muddy Pond, a favorite spot for fishing.

A shallow bay partly separated Roxbury from Boston, its neighboring settlement to the east. Brookline and Newton became its northern boundary. Dedham was to the west. To the south was Dorchester.

The boundary line between Roxbury and Boston was established in 1636 by the General Court when it ordered "that all the rest of the ground between Dorchester bounds and Boston bounds shall belong to the town of Roxbury, easterly of Charles River, except the property of the aforesaid towns which they have purchased of particular persons. Roxbury not to extend above eight miles in length from their meeting house."

WHERE JOHN MAY LIVED

Arrow points (on an 1832 map of Roxbury) to the approximate site of John May's homestead, described in Roxbury Land and Church Records as "eighteene accres of land lying next Stony River over against the farme of the heires of Joseph Weld and the farther end theirof poynting southwest and the hether end northeast."

What was food like in the household of John May?

Mr. Drake in his history of Roxbury provides a good description of how the early settlers fared:

"Their poverty made simplicity of living a necessity, and any cooking which required sugar was too expensive for our early ancestors. For a century and a half the morning and evening repast consisted of boiled Indian meal and milk, or of porridge or broth made of pease and beans, dealt out in small wooden bowls, and flavored by being boiled with salted beef or pork. Hasty pudding and succotash were common articles of diet. Home-brewed beer was accounted a necessary of life, and the orchards soon yielded a bountiful supply of cider. Bread was made of 'rye and Indian,' instead of flour.

"The noonday meal, despatched in fifteen minutes, began with Indian pudding, relished with a little molasses. Next came a piece of broiled salt pork with cabbage, or black broth, fried eggs, brown bread and cider. The dinner of 'boiled victuals' was served in wooden trenchers. In their season they had melons, and for extra occasions a little cherry wine. The meat of the shagbark (hickory nuts) was dried and pounded and then put into their porridge to thicken it. The barley fire cake was served at breakfast. They parched corn and pounded it, and made it into a nocake. Baked pumpkins were common. The extra dish for company was a cake made of strawberries and parched corn. There was in the beginning little butcher's meat, a want supplied to a considerable extent by game and fish. Baked beans, baked Indian pudding, and newly baked rye and Indian bread on Wednesday, and salt-fish regularly on Saturdays, are historical dishes, though gradually losing their hold.

"Although potatoes were sent here as early as 1628 or 1629 for seed, they were not made an article of daily food until about the year 1800, when they took the place of turnips, which had previously been in common use. . . (The potato is described as a 'despised root' which came into use due to a scarcity of corn in 1762 and 1763). Indian corn, squashes, pumpkins, and sceva beans were indigenous. Tobacco, which was easily cultivated, was considered essential to health and comfort, and many can yet remember when every farmer had his tobacco-yard, as well as his cornfield. It was to him physic in sickness, and a comfort at all times. Most dishes were of pewter. Forks were hardly known in England before 1650, and silver forks first appeared in Boston after the war of 1812."

The population of Roxbury in 1652 is calculated to have been about seven hundred. Husbandry (agriculture) was the occupation of most of the people.

Clothing was tailored from home-made woolen fabrics. Sunday suits were expensive and were intended to last a lifetime.

John May and his family attended worship services at the First Church, where John Eliot, the apostle to the Indians, had become the community's spiritual leader on November 5, 1632.

John Eliot

The Eliot church was on Centre Street, at the corner of Eliot Street, near Jamaica Pond. The apostle's estate of two and a half acres was a long, narrow strip, having a front on Washington Street (the Dedham Turnpike). The dwelling place was a two-story structure with a gambrel roof. The site was not far from the homes of Captain John May and John May, Jr.

Eliot, born in Nazing, County Essex, England, was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge. After he decided to become a preacher, and found little encouragement in England as a Puritan minister, he came to New England on the Lion, arriving at Boston on November 2, 1631.

The Rev. Thomas Welde was the first minister of the Roxbury church, commencing in July of 1632. The meeting-house, erected in the summer of 1632 on Meeting-House Hill, provided a place for worship in which to settle "an able orthodox minister." When the Rev. Mr. Welde decided to return to England, where he died in 1661, he was succeeded by the Rev. Mr. Eliot whose friends in Roxbury prevailed in bringing him to their town from Boston. He remained in Roxbury until his death on May 20, 1690.

The first volume of the records of the First Church, in Eliot's own handwriting, contains "a recorde of such as adjoyned themselves unto the fellowship of this church of Christ at Roxborough; as also of such children as they had when they joyned, & of such as were borne unto them under the holy covenant of this church who are most properly the seede of this church."

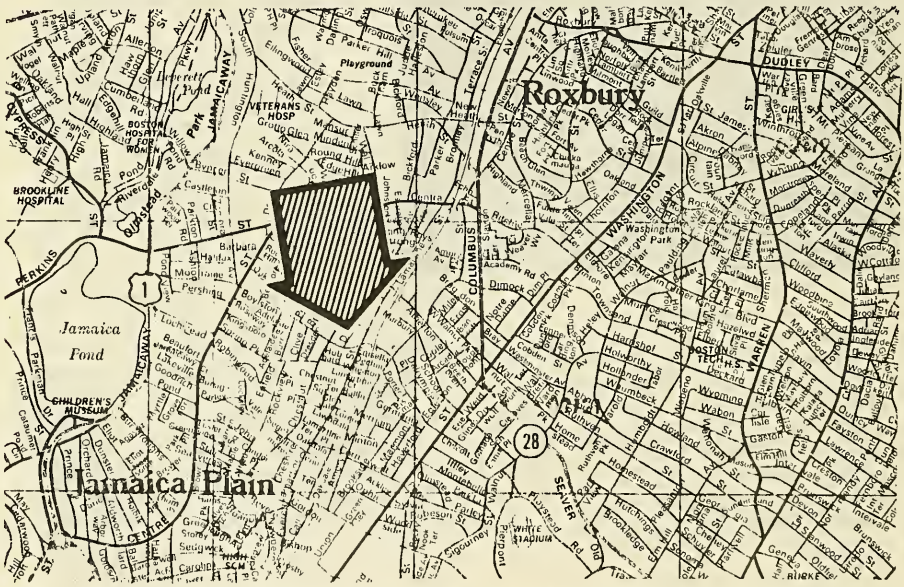
The first name in the volume is that of the principal

founder of the town and the church: "Mr. William Pinchon came in the first company in 1630. He was one of the first foundation of the church at Roxborough; was chosen as an assistant yearly so long as he lived among us . . ."

Eliot's evangelical work among the Indians made it necessary that he have a colleague. When Samuel Danforth finished his studies at Harvard in 1643 he was invited to assist Mr. Eliot. He accepted and was ordained at Roxbury on September 24, 1650.

Pastor Danforth, whose sermons usually were enriched by the inclusion of forty to fifty passages of Scripture, served the Roxbury church until his death on November 10, 1674. Under date of November 19, Eliot wrote an emotional passage concerning the death of his colleague:

> "Our Rev. pastor, Mr. Samuel Danforth, sweetly rested from his labors. It pleased the Lord to brighten his passage to glory . . . My brother Danforth made the most glorious end that I ever saw."



Arrow points (on street map of Greater Boston) to the approximate location of John May's homestead, situated in a "triangle abutting R. Gamblin east, the highway northwest, and Thomas Bell's orchard southwest," along Stony River. This would apparently fall within a rectangle bounded by Amory and Chestnut streets, between Boylston Street and Glen Lane.

John Prudden

4

The "Free Schoole" Supported by Mays

EDUCATION of the children was regarded by the people of Roxbury as vitally important, even in the town's earliest years.

When the Rev. John Eliot became pastor of the First Church in 1632 he served not only as spiritual leader of the town, he gave much of his time to instruction of the children. He pushed hard for establishing a free school as soon as possible.

John May was one member of the apostle Eliot's congregation who did not need to be convinced of the importance of a school. When he arrived in Roxbury in 1640 he had two sons, John and Samuel, both of school age.

Sixty inhabitants -- "well nigh the whole town" -- responded to the pastor's plea and joined in the covenant to establish "The Free Schoole in Roxburie." The pact, in which the covenantees bound themselves to the payment of certain sums yearly for the support of the school, was dated "the last day of August in the year of our Lord 1645."

This compact was followed up in 1645 when the covenantees pledged their houses, barns, orchards and homesteads.

The preamble to the agreement says:

> "Whereas the inhabitants of Roxburie, out of their religious care of posteritie, have taken into consideration how necessarie the education of their children in literature will be to fitt them for publicke service both in church and commonwealth in succeding ages; they therefore have unanimously consented and agreed to erect a free schoole in the said town of Roxburie and to allow 20 pounds pr. annum to the schoolmaster."

They chose seven feoffees "for the well ordering of the schoole and schoolars" who had entire charge and supervision

of the collection and disbursement of funds. This method of support was followed for nearly a century. When sufficient funds came in from other sources, collection of the originally subscribed rents came to an end.

Among the principal benefactors of the well-endowed institution was Thomas Bell, whose orchard was the southwestern boundary of John May's home lot. He bequeathed all of his real estate in Roxbury in trust for "the maintenance of a schoolmaster and free schoole for the teaching and instructing of poore men's children in the town." This gift (in 1672), a very large one for the time, made the school one of the most richly endowed in the country. Mr. Bell, a merchant, was a resident of Roxbury from 1635 until he returned to England in 1654, where he died in 1672.

Early records of the school are contained in "The Old School Book" which has found safe haven in the vault of the Houghton Library at Harvard University. The small book -- about seven by eight inches -- is a manuscript covered with dark, time-stained vellum and tied with a cord of skin. It is regarded as one of the most valuable documents in the early history of New England. The book is rich in signatures, including that of John May!

The method and sincerity of the school's early supporters are clear in the 1646 compact wherein "it is agreed by all of those inhabitants of Roxbury as have or shall subscribe their names or marks to this book for themselves severally and for their respective heirs and executors that not only their houses, but their fields, orchards, gardens, outhouses and homesteads, shall be and hereby are bounded and made liable to and for the several sums and rents before and hereafter in this book mentioned to be paid by every of them."

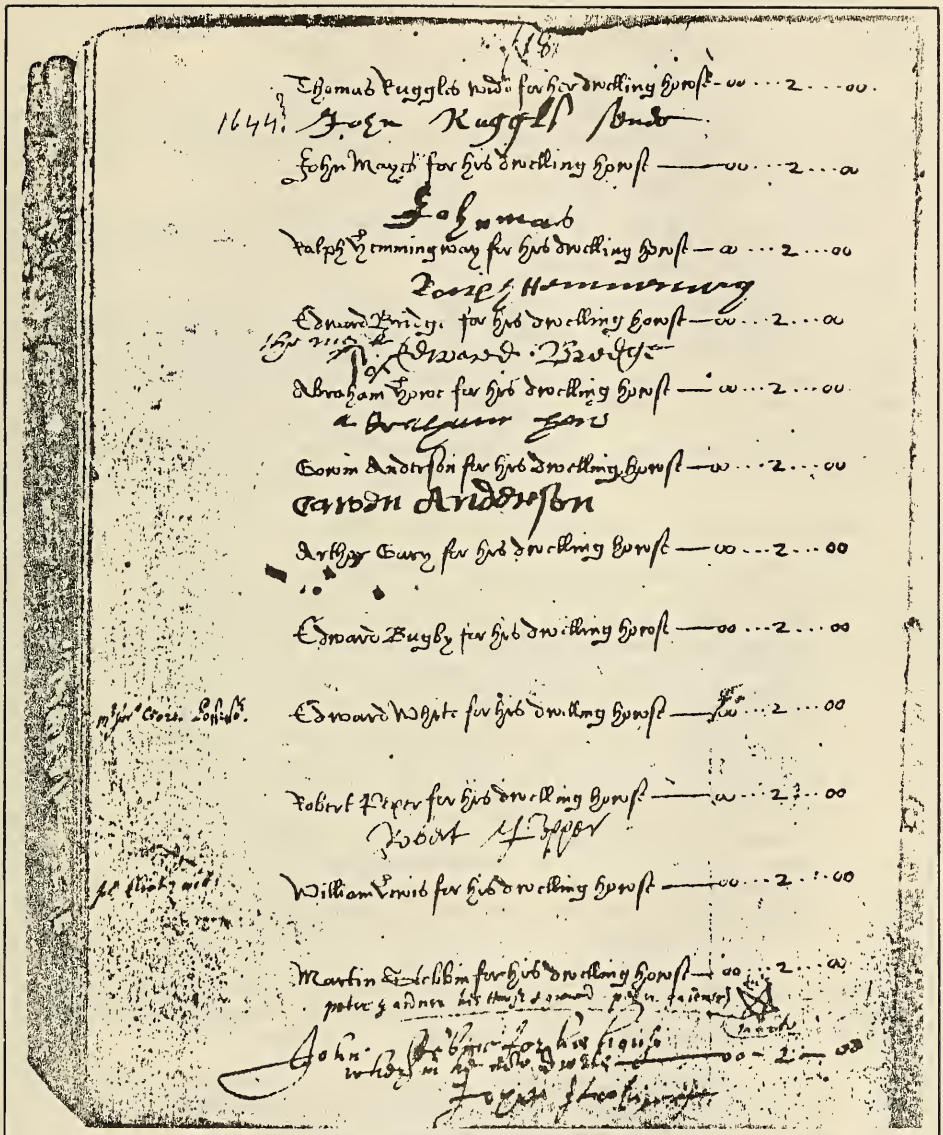
On Page 18 of the book appears the pledge of John May. It is second from top of the page. The clerk entered:

John Mayes for his dwelling house 00 - 2 - 00

Under this, John May signed his name. Apparently he tried to sign as it had been written by the clerk; the result is a signature which appears more like "John maes" than "John Mayes." His contribution, as were most "for his dwelling house," was to be two shillings annually.

Others whose pledge appears on the page with John May's are Thomas Ruggles widow, Ralph Hemmingway (Hemmenway), Edward Bridge, Abraham Howe, Gawin Anderson, Arthur Gary, Edward Bugby (Bugbee), Edward White, Robert Pepper, William Davis, Martin Stebbin and John Stebbin.

"The Free Schoole of Roxburie" later was known as "The



A PAGE IN THE TREASURED BOOK

The signature of John May (second from top), written as John Mayes, in The Old School Book, 1645-1780.
(Reproduced by permission of the Roxbury Latin School)

Grammar School in the easterly part of the town of Roxbury." Later yet it became "The Roxbury Latin School."

The Roxbury Latin School, at 101 St. Theresa Avenue in the West Roxbury section of Boston, now is the third oldest school existing in the United States. For two hundred and fifty years it was the oldest -- if not only -- free school in America not aided by public funds.

After the school had been established by the covenantees in 1645 one of the major problems was to secure and compensate a proper schoolmaster.

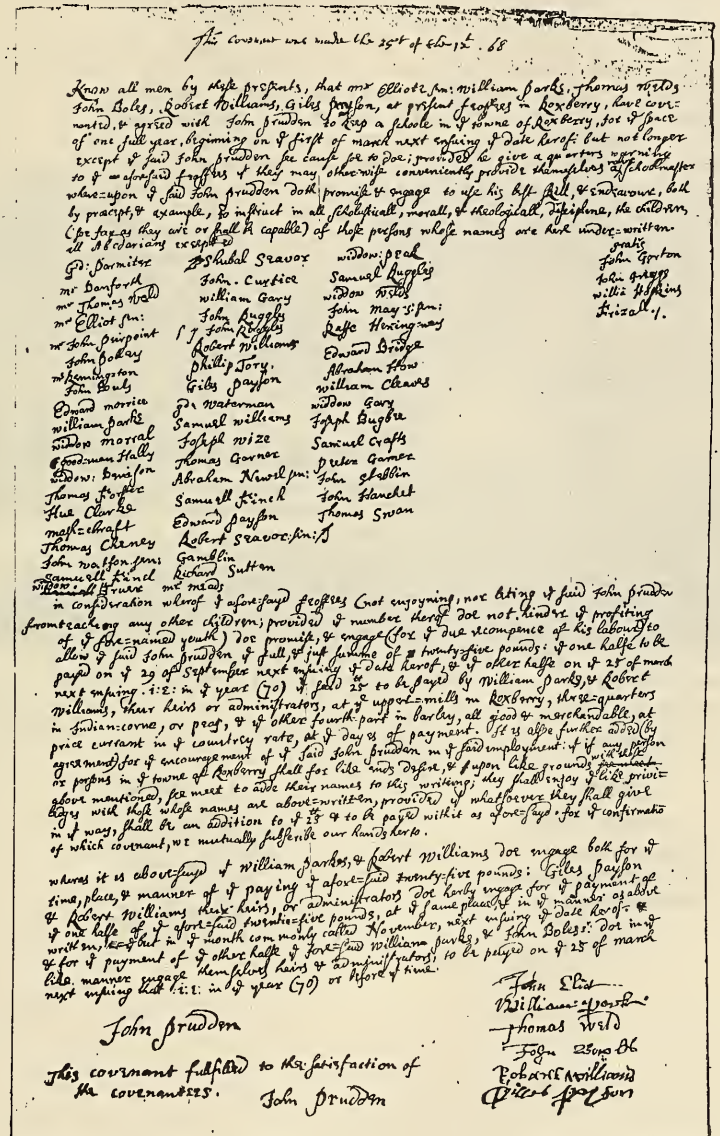
On the 25th of the 12th month (February), 1668, fifty-eight covenantees were listed in support of apostle Eliot and five feoffees in an agreement to hire John Prudden as schoolmaster. Among names in the list is that of "John May's: sen:" Although it appears "sen:" the name is that of John May, Jr. The elder John May was still living, he being 77 at the time. The "sen:" may have been added because John May, Jr., had a son, John, born in 1663.

The covenant (reproduced on next page) said:

> Know all men by these presents, that Mr. Elliot sen: William Parks, Thomas Weld, John Boles, Robert Williams, Giles Payson, at present feoffees in Roxberry, have covenanted, & agreed with John Prudden to keep a schoole in ye towne of Roxberry, for ye space of one full year, beginning on ye first of March next ensuing ye date hereof; but not longer except ye said John Prudden see cause soe to doe; provided he give a quarters warning to ye aforesaid feoffees yt they may other-wise conveniently provide them-selves another schoolmaster where-upon ye said John Prudden doth promise & engage to use his best skill, & endeavor, both by precept, & example, to instruct in all scholasticall, morall, & theologicall, discipline, the children (soe far as they are or shall be capable) of those persons whose names are here underwritten, all ABCdarians excepted. (Note: word is abecedarians).

Then follows a list of the fifty-eight names of the covenantees. They did not sign their names, although Mr. Prudden and the feoffees did. The agreement continued:

> in consideration wherof ye afore-sayd feoffees (not enjoyning, nor leting ye said John Prudden from teaching any other children; provided ye number therof doe not hinder ye profiting of ye fore-named youth) doe promise, & engage (for ye due recompence of his labour) to allow ye said John Prudden ye full, & just summe of twenty-five pounds: ye one halfe to be payed on ye 29 of Sep-



THE COVENANT OF FEBRUARY 25, 1668

tember next ensuing ye date herof, & ye other halfe on ye ye 25 of March next ensuing, i:e: in ye year (70) ye said 25£ to be payed by William Parks, & Robert Williams, their heirs or administrators, at ye upper-mills in Roxberry, three-quarters in Indian-corne, or peas, & ye other fourth-part in barley, all good & merchandable, at price currant in ye countrey rate, at ye dayes of payment. It is also further added (by agreement) for ye encouragement of ye said John Prudden in ye said employment: yt if any person or persons in ye towne of Roxberry shall for like ends desire, & upon like grounds with those above mentioned, see meet to adde their names to this writeing; they shall enjoy ye like priviledges with those whose names are above-written, provided yt whatsoever they shall give in yt way, shall be an addition to ye 25£ & to be payed with it as afore-sayd for ye confirmation of which covenant, we mutually subscribe our hands herto.

wheras it is above-sayd yt William Parks, & Robert Williams doe engage both for ye time, place, & manner of ye paying ye afore-said twenty-five pounds: Giles Payson & Robert Williams their heirs, or administrators doe herby engage for ye payment of ye one half of ye afore-said twentie-five pounds, at ye same place, & in ye manner as above written, etc but in ye payment of ye other halfe ye fore-said William Parks & John Boles: doe in ye like manner engage themselves heirs & administrators, to be payed on ye 25 March next ensuing that i:e: in ye year (70) or before yt time.

(signed)
John Prudden

This covenant fullfilled to the satisfaction of the covenantees.

(signed)
John Prudden

(signed by)
John Eliot
William Parks
Thomas Weld
John Bouls
Robart Williams
Giles Payson

THE ROXBURY LATIN SCHOOL

This is The Roxbury Latin School as it appears today. It is in West Roxbury, a part of Boston. The headmaster is the Rev. F. Washington Jarvis.

5

John and Sarah Die, Only Six Days Apart

JOHN MAY'S WIFE died on June 18, 1651. The couple had been married for more than twenty years and she had been a resident of Roxbury for eleven years.

Pastor Eliot recorded her death in his diary, adding:

"Sister Mayes died a very gracious and savory Christian."

The loss of his wife increased the burden of work shared by John May and his sons. Although life in Roxbury then was quiet and somewhat uneventful, it was not an easy existence. The calm was shattered, however, when the news spread through New England in 1656 that Anne Hibbins had been hanged as a witch in Salem, a town north of Boston and not far from Roxbury. It was not until 1692, however, that preaching inspired the witchcraft delusion at Salem which resulted in nineteen hangings. Executions in Europe of women for witchcraft between 1484 and 1782 were believed to have reached a total of three hundred thousand.

John's sons were still living at home when their mother died, but they were adult men, ready to take wives and begin settlement of land and homes of their own. With that in view, the lonely and elderly patriarch of the May family in Roxbury wed a second wife, whose Christian name was Sarah. She was confirmed into the First Church on May 15, 1659.

As most of Roxbury's early settlers were of English origin, they generally were eager to learn any news from London carried to them by seafarers or new immigrants. The news was especially of interest when they were told that Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth, had died in 1658 and that the House of Stuart had been restored with the eldest son of the executed King Charles I taking the throne as King Charles II. His parliament restored the Anglican church and refused freedom of worship to dissenters.

The news originated in the colonies when the new monarch ordered British troops to seize New Netherland (Manhattan and environs) from the Dutch and granted the territory to his brother James, Duke of York. Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch director-general surrendered peacefully. The province of New Netherland and the city of New Amsterdam became New York. Although the Dutch were to recapture both in 1673, they ceded all by treaty to Britain in 1674.

The big news from England in 1665 was comprised of the reports about the Great Plague in London which claimed the lives of 68,000. Then, in 1666, the colonists learned about the great fire which swept London, destroying more than thirteen thousand homes and nearly ninety churches.

But the old sea captain, John May, now was nearing the end of his own life. Seriously ill and fearing death was near, he dictated his will on a Sunday morning. It was dated April 24, 1670. The will was a nuncupative, or declaratory one, he being very sick at the time. In the will he mentioned his second wife, but not by name, and his sons John and Samuel.

The New England Historical and Genealogical Register (in Volume 48) says of John May's will:

> We whose names are here underwritten being sent for upon the Sabbath morning being the 24th of April 1670 to come unto ye House of Jno. Mays now deceased hee then being sick yet of a perfect Understanding hee said to Us he wished to dispose of his estate to prevent trouble &c between his two sons & his wife.
>
> Son John to have all his tools &c, half a lot of land on east side of stony river.
>
> A brass pan to his eldest grandchild.
>
> Rest of land &c to son Samuel.
>
> Household goods divided equally between two sons after death of his wife.
>
> Edward Bridge and Edward Morris to be his overseers, sons John and Samuel executors.
>
> 29 Apr. 1670 (Attest) William Parke
> Edward Morris
>
> Inventory apprized by Edward Bridge, Edward Morris, Robert Seaver.

Four days after his will was drawn, John May died on April 28, 1670.

The ceremonial procedure for his funeral had little similarity to the traditional funeral of the Twentieth Century. Bodies were not embalmed and therefore were buried soon after death. Coffins were ornate only for the wealthy. Most of them were no more than wooden boxes. Clothing was too valuable to put into a grave; bodies were wrapped in inexpensive shrouds.

For nearly a century marriages, baptisms and funerals were solemnized at the First Church. This was an "unbeautified" structure with a thatched roof. Its walls had not been plastered. It was without gallery, pews and spire. The people sat on benches, men and women on opposite sides of the church.

If John May's funeral was like others of the time -- and that seems most probable -- the tolling of the bell summoned the mourners at the appointed time.

Wine flowed freely at funerals, as it did upon nearly all public occasions. Usually tobacco was provided for the men's pipes. It was the custom to give a pair of gloves to each of those present, which mostly would be the men of the community. The reason for this custom is not clear, but it may have had origin in a belief that the gloves were to hide sin . . . permitting the bearers to carry the mourned one with "clean hands."

The funeral was a silent ritual. Nothing was read -- not a sermon, not a eulogy, not a prayer. The men who served as bearers carried the coffin solemnly to the grave and then stood by while the burial was completed.

The minister was usually present. As John May was under the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Danforth at the time of his death, it seems most probable that Mr. Danforth was at graveside.

It seems most likely, too, that the Rev. John Eliot, colleague of Mr. Danforth and surely a friend of John May, as well as having earlier been his spiritual leader, would have been among those at the burial.

Only six days after the death of John May, the widow Sarah May died.

It is presumed that the bodies of John May and his two wives were interred at the Roxbury Burial Ground (at the corner of Washington and Eustis streets). It had been in use since 1633. Several of John May's descendants were buried there.

John Mays, Jr.

6

John Mays Dies at 40, Eight Children Left

DESPITE THE HARDSHIPS often faced by Roxbury's early settlers, John May reared his sons to become respected, active leaders in the community.

The year in which he brought his family to the colony was one in which there was a great scarcity of money. The General Court of Massachusetts ordered that corn should pass in payment for new debts.

In 1643, three years after the May family arrived, the five New England colonies confederated for mutual defense.

In 1645 sickness struck. Of this the apostle Eliot wrote in his diary:

> "The first week in the 10th month. (December on the Old Style calendar). This was the most mortal week that ever Roxbury saw, to have five dy in one week and many more lay sick about town."

That was the same year in which the Roxbury Free School was established. Considering that John May's eldest son, John, was no more than 14 at the time, and Samuel was younger, it seems likely the two youths may have derived some educational benefit from the school. It is more likely, however, they already had received tutored instruction from the apostle Eliot who stood out as a pillar of wisdom and leadership in the early years of Roxbury.

In 1646 the people of Roxbury faced another crisis, described by Eliot:

> "This year, about the end of the 5th month (July), upon a suddaine, innumerable armys of caterpillars filled the country, devouring the grasse, oats, corn, wheat and barley. They would crosse highways by thousands. Much prayer was made to God about it and fasting in divers places, and the Lord heard and on a sud-

daine took them all away in all parts of the country, to the wonderment of all men. It was the Lord for it was done suddainely."

Samuel Danforth, Eliot's colleague, but not yet ordained, wrote that the caterpillars "marched thorow our fields like armed men, and spoyled much corn."

The winter of 1646-47 was extremely mild. The minister's diary says:

"This winter was one of the mildest that ever we had, no snow all winter long, nor sharp weather, but they had long floods at Connecticut which was much spoyle to ye corne in the meadows. We never had a bad day to goe preach to the Indians all this winter praised be the Lord."

But the mildness of the winter was followed by epidemic illness. The diary tells of it:

"A great sickness epidemical did the Lord lay upon us, that the greatest part of the town was sick at once. Few died, but of these were the choycest flowers and most gracious saints."

The epidemic prevailed throughout New England and was attributed, at least in part, to the absence of frost in the previous winter.

John Mays, Jr., on November 19, 1656, at Roxbury, married Sarah Bruce, a widow who was still four months short of her 19th birthday. She was born Sarah Brewer on March 8, 1638, in Roxbury, the youngest of five children born to Daniel and Joanna Brewer.

Daniel Brewer, his wife, and a son, Daniel, came to New England on the ship Lion, which arrived in Boston on September 16, 1632. He settled in Roxbury and was a freeman May 14, 1634. Children born to the Brewers in Roxbury were Nathaniel, Ann, Joanna and Sarah.

Brewer died in the early part of 1646. In his will, signed "D B" (his mark), he bequeathed "to dau. Sarah, a fflock bed furnished, my new kettle & a Pewter dish." He also stipulated payments of money to be paid to his daughters. Sarah was to receive the sum of five pounds . . . "to be paid in Cattell or Corne." However, the will stated that the payment was to be spread over three years following the death of their mother. The widow Joanna Brewer lived forty-three years beyond her husband's death; thus it is probable that Sarah never received her five pounds. Her mother died at age 87 on February 7, 1689.

Daniel Brewer's will principally provided for his wife. He left "two Oxen, one Steere Calfe wth one Carte & Plowe" to his son, Daniel, along with "Sixe accres of Land lying neere the greate Lotts, And Sixe accres of swampe ground, wth the wood thereupon," but he added: "It is my will that my sonn, Daniell, shall not onely plowe his mother's ground sufficiently & well for her seed, but shall also Cutt downe & bring in her corne, & her fier wood to her howse, & lay out the dung all of it if he keep his owne Cattell else where."

John, Jr. -- who wrote his name "Mays" as it often was pronounced -- was admitted freeman in 1660.

That was a memorable year in Roxbury for another reason; an entry in the minister's diary for February 1, 1660, says:

> "About 7 o'clock there was an earthquake. At Roxbury the shaking was most discernible."

There was something to talk about in 1661 when on May 28 in Roxbury, "Judah Browne, and Peter Pierson, Quakers, tied to a carts tail and whipt through the town with 10 stripes after receiving 20 at Boston, and again 10 stripes at Dedham."

In 1663, according to the minister's diary, another earthquake occurred in Roxbury. And in 1664: "A great and dreadful comet seen in New England."

Eight children were born to John Mays, Jr., by Sarah, one of whom died in infancy. Their first son, Eleazer, was born on February 12, 1661, and died in June.

The other children were:

MARY (or Mariah)	b.	Nov. 7, 1657
SARAH		Sept. 8, 1659
JOHN		May 19, 1663
MEHETABEL		May 6, 1665
NAOMI		May 20, 1667
ELISHA		Mar. 20, 1668/9
EPHRAIM		Dec. 23, 1670

The Mays -- as most colonists -- prospered during the struggle in England to remove King Charles I from the throne, and under the Cromwell Commonwealth that followed the beheading of Charles in 1649. But, after the House of Stuart was restored with Charles II on the throne, a change came. There was a constant struggle for colonial rights under the charter.

Drake, in his history of Roxbury, wrote about this:

"The General Court, in its efforts for their preservation, attempted to remove causes of offence, such as Eliot's book favoring a Republic, which it condemned to the flames, and by modifying its laws against Quakers. They succeeded so far as to delay for nearly a quarter of a century a catastrophe they could not prevent.

"Among other petitions to the General Court praying it to be firm in its resolution 'to adhere to the Patent and privileges thereof' is one dated Oct. 25, 1664, and signed by Samuel May along with the Rev. John Eliot and many other inhabitants of Roxbury."

What happened then is told by Drake, as follows:

"The abrogation of its charter in 1685 by James II, and the arbitrary government of Andros (governor of the colony), stirred Massachusetts to its profoundest depths. The royal governor, with four of his council, were empowered to make laws and raise moneys without any assembly or consent of the people. The laws were not printed. Town meetings were prohibited, excepting on a certain day once a year. Heavy fees were extorted, fifty shillings being the cost for the probate of a will. This was not all, for their charter being gone, their title to their lands and estates went with it, and 'all was the King's, and they must take patents from his new representatives, and give what they see meet to impose.' The people saw themselves deprived of the privileges of Englishmen, and that their condition was little better than slavery. They said, 'Our rulers are those that hate us and the churches of Christ and his servants in the ministry; they are their daily scorn, taunt, and reproach, and yet are we, our lives and liberties, civil and ecclesiastical, in their hands to do with as they please.'

"Early in 1689, upon a rumor that the Prince of Orange had landed in England, the flame which had long been smothered burst forth with violence, and on April 18th Gov. Andros, Edward Randolph, such of the council as had been most active, and other obnoxious persons, about fifty in all, were seized and confined, and the old magistrates reinstated. The men of Roxbury took part with their brethrn of Boston in this revolutionary proceeding, and assisted them in the capture of Fort Hill and the Castle. On May 9th she sent Lieut. Samuel Ruggles and Nathaniel Holmes to meet deputies from the other towns to settle and establish the government. The instructions given at this meeting being too general, another was called, the record of which follows:

'At a meeting of the inhabitants of Roxbury, orderly called upon the 20th day of this instant May, it was

signifyed by the sayd inhabitants that it was their desire that the governor, deputy governor, and such assistants as were chosen and sworn in the year 1686, should resume the government of the colony according to charter liberty.

'JNO. GORE Clerk'

"John Bowles and Lieut Ruggles represented the town at another meeting, held at the same place June 5th, 'to consult for the present emergency.'"

The homestead of John Mays, Jr., was near the intersection of South Street and the Dedham Turnpike. South Street in 1663 was described as "that highway leading out of Dedham highway by John Polley's home lott, and so along by John Weld's farm, and so leading to Bear Marsh, the latter being the name given to the territory embracing the meadows upon the head waters of Stony Brook." It is irregular in form, running first due south, then northwest, its circuitous windings beginning at the Third Church, and terminating opposite the Second. Its southerly bend, at Roslindale, makes a part of Washington Street.

Both John May the elder and John junior were still living in Roxbury when another great comet was seen in 1667. The entry in the pastor's diary says there "Appeared a comet or blazing stream which extended to a small star in the river Eridamus, but the star was hid by reason of its proximity to the sun."

Only a year after his father died, John Mays, Jr., faced imminent death. It was the summer of 1671. He was seriously ill and blind. He was only 40.

Until then life had been good for John and Sarah. Much of the land his father owned had become his land and he had added to it. Also, he had bought land elsewhere. He farmed, did carpentry work, and had prospered.

None of the children was yet married. Mary, the eldest, would not be 14 until November. John May III, the eldest son, was 8. And Ephraim, the youngest, had been born two days before the preceding Christmas Day.

John junior realized the importance of a will, one that would be fair and generous to his beloved wife of the past fifteen years. Also, he knew, it must provide assistance and guidance for the rearing of the seven children he would leave.

He would, he decided, place much power in the hands of Sarah . . . which not always was the way in the Seventeenth Century . . . and he would seek the mercy of God.

"My Will is," said John in the carefully drawn document, "seeing that my Children are young, and I know not how they may be exercised by affliction, before they come of age, although I hope in God's mercy towards my house, and I doe desire if my Children should be possessed of that Estate God hath given me, as I have above expressed, yet if need do require and there doth not arise sufficient out of the improvement of the estate for their comfortible bringing up, then I give full power to my Wife, which I doe make the sole Executrix of my whole estate, that also with the advice and counsel of my own sons, may sell some land, that may be sufficient for the relief of my children."

He died on September 11, 1671.

At County Court in Boston on October 31, administration of the estate was granted to "Sarah, his relict, she having brought in an inventory of said Estate and given security to administer according to law and the declared Will of her late Husband."

John Mays declared in his will that Sarah should "have the improvement of my whole Estate, for the bringing up of my children, and for her comfortable livelihood, until my oldest son John comes of age of one and twenty years, and then my son John will have the one half of my homestead, and half of my housing, the other half to belong to my Wife during her life, if that she remains my Widow . . . "

He said he was giving to his wife "my salt Marsh during her life and do freely leave it to her disposal at her death, provided she disposes of it tc some one or more of my children, as she lovest most."

As did his father, he left carpenter's tools. These, he said, "I leave at her disposal, as she shall see best, provided it be to some one or more of my sons."

His will contained a strong charge to 8-year-old John:

"My Will is," he said, "that my son John be dutiful and obedient to his mother, until he come to the age of twenty one years, if that my Wife abide my Widow, but if she marry, then I leave it to my Wife and neighbors, that if they think best, he shall be put to some good trade, and after the age of one and twenty years, he shall be made possessor of the one half of my homestead, house, and land and meadows adjoining, and half the lot I bought of Goodman Howe, and also if my wife should marry, then my Will is, at the age of twenty one years, my son John shall have possession of the whole of my homestead, and the whole of the lot I bought of Goodman Howe, that is, all that is in my hands at my decease.

"That is," he continued, "my son behaving dutifully to

his mother and paying to his four sisters, Mariah, Sarah, Naomi, and Mehetabel each of them gradually as they come to the age of eighteen years, or at their marriage day, or within two years after he came into possession of the whole within two years more, the other half -- always naming that if my wife marry, she shall be possessed of the one half of my movables. And the improvement of all the Estate that I have not appropriated to my Wife upon marriage, shall be improved to help pay these legacies. By the improvement of the whole Estate, I mean the whole till my eldest son come of age."

He provided for the two younger sons:

"My will is that my other two sons, Elisha and Ephraim, shall, if they live, learn some trade, and when they come of the age of one and twenty years, the one of them to have the land I bought of Goodman Morris, that layeth by the land of John Boogby, and the other to have the land I have at Woolamannpagru, and choice of either parcel I give to Elisha with this provision that if he choose, then he shall pay to my daughter Mariah, if she shall be alive, four pounds, and Ephraim shall pay her twenty shillings."

Aware of perils in providing for children so young, John Mays added a clause which said "if it please God to take away any of my children, before they are either married or have heirs, then that which did belong to the deceased shall be equally divided among the rest of the survivors and each to have as much as another, and if my eldest should dye before he marry, then my next eldest to have and possess that which did belong to the eldest, he doing and performing what the eldest was to do and is obliged to do, and then what did belong to the next son to be equally divided among the next."

He entreated "my loving friends, Sergt. Peleg Scathew and John Bridge to be my Overseers, and hand it to my Wife, if she please to choose a third, which accordingly she doth choose her brother Daniel Brewer."

After the will was entered into probate and it apparently not being clear what sum the daughters were to receive, John Addington, clerk of the court, added to the file:

> "It appearing on sufficient testimony on file with the original will that it was the estates minded that his son John should pay his four Sisters within named, according to this Will, the sum of twenty pounds a piece, although omitted to express the same, the Court ordered that so it should be."

On September 8, 1680, the Probate Court of Suffolk County appointed guardians for the three sons. John was then 17. Elisha was 11. Ephraim was 9.

The court record says only:

> "John Watson and Henry Bowen, both of Roxbury, New England, appointed guardians to John Mays, Elisha Mays and Ephraim Mays, three sons of John Mays, some time of Roxbury, deceased."

There is no indication therein as to whether the widow Sarah, who would have been 42 at the time, remarried or had died.

Regardless, the hopes prayerfully expressed in his will by John Mays were adequately fulfilled. Each of his sons attained manhood in Roxbury, learned a trade, and became a good citizen -- God-fearing men of whom their father would have been proud.

John May III, ever "dutiful and obedient to his mother," came into his inheritance in 1684. Less than a month later, on June 2, 1684, he married Prudence Bridge, the 20-year-old daughter of John and Prudence (Robinson) Bridge of Roxbury.

John III was an active leader in the church, as had been his father and grandfather. He was elected to serve as a deacon. He became a selectman of Roxbury.

Mary May became the wife of Joseph Pepper at Roxbury on November 4, 1675. The marriage ended soon, in tragedy. On April 21, 1676, Joseph was slain by Indians at Sudbury, while under the command of Capt. Samuel Wadsworth.

Roxbury had become engulfed in "King Philip's War," the 1675-76 war with the Indians which the Rev. Mr. Eliot said was one of the severest trials New England was ever called upon to face.

Of Roxbury's share in the conflict, which was so destructive to the colonists, Eliot says in his diary:

> "John Dresser dyed in the warrs and was there buryed. He acquitted himself valiantly. We had so many slaine in the warr, no towne for bigness lost more if any so many."

Eight others of the Roxbury men were killed at Sudbury in the fighting which cost Joseph Pepper his life.

Mary wed her second husband, Joshua Seaver, a Roxbury native, on February 28, 1677.

Sarah May became the wife of Lt. Samuel Williams of Roxbury on February 24, 1679. She died in Roxbury on December 12, 1712, at age 54. Her husband died in 1735.

No records were found to show the marriages or the deaths of Mehetabel and Naomi.

Clearly, as directed in his father's will, John May III

I, John Mays, Jr. of Roxbury, in the County of Suffolk, under affliction of body, and yet through the mercy of God having in a measure my understanding, and yet not knowing the day of my death, nor how soon it may be, I do desire to leave the Estate that God hath given me as follows.

My soul, I bequeath into the hands of my merciful savior, Jesus Christ, and my body to the Grave, to be decently buried by my Wife and children. My will is that all my just debts be honestly paid, and funeral charges duly discharged, and my beloved Wife Sarah to have the improvement of my whole Estate, for the bringing up of my children, and for her comfortable livelihood, until my oldest son John comes of age of one and twenty years, and then my son John will have the one half of my homestead, and half of my housing, the other half to belong to my Wife during her life, if that she remains my Widow, but if the Providence of God should guide, that it shall appear best for my Wife to change her condition, and marry again, then my Will is that my Wife shall have at her own disposal that which fallest to her by her late husband's Will, and the one half of my movables within doors, and Cattle without, my movables being equally divided, and then my Wife to take her choice of the half, and then my Will is the other half shall be improved for the bringing up of my children, and what can be spared of it shall go towards the paying my daughters their portions.

Farther, I give to my Wife my salt Marsh during her life and do freely leave it to her disposal at her death, provided she disposes of it to some one or more of my children, as she lovest most. Also my Carpenters Tools I leave at her disposal, as she shall see best, provided it be to some one or more of my sons. Secondly, my

Secondly, my Will is that my son John be dutiful and obedient to his mother, until he come to the age of twenty one years, if that my Wife abide my Widow, but if she marry, then I leave it to my Wife and neighbors, that if they think best, he shall be put to some good trade, and after the age of one and twenty years, he shall be made possessor of the one half of my homestead, house, and land and meadows adjoining, and half the lot I bought of Goodman Howe, and also if my wife should marry, then my Will is, at the age of twenty one years, my son John shall have possession of the whole of my homestead, and the whole of the lot I bought of Goodman Howe, that is, all that is in my hands at my decease. That is, my son behaving dutifully to his mother and paying to his four sisters, Mariah, Sarah, Naomi, and Mehetabel each of them gradually as they come to the age of eighteen years, or at their marriage day, or within two years after he came into possession of the half of his portion, then to pay to each of his sisters one half, and at the possession of the whole within two years more, the other half -- always naming that if my wife marry, she shall be possessed of the one half of my movables. And the improvement of all the Estate that I have not appropriated to my Wife upon marriage, shall be improved to help pay these legacies. By the improvement of the whole Estate, I mean the whole till my eldest son come of age.

Thirdly, my Will is, that my other two sons, Elisha and Ephraim, shall, if they live, learn some trade, and when they come of the age of one and twenty years, the one of them to have the land I bought of Goodman Morris, that layeth by the land of John Boogby, and the other to have the land I have at Woolamannpagru, and choice of either parcel I give to Elisha with this provision that if he choose, then he shall pay to my daughter Mariah, if she shall be alive, four pounds, and Ephraim shall pay her twenty shillinge.

Fourthly, my Will is, if please God to take away any of my Children, before they are either married or have heirs, then that which did belong to the deceased shall be equally divided among the rest of the survivors and each to have as much as another, and if my eldest should dye before he marry, then my next eldest to have and possess that which did belong to the eldest, he doing and performing what the eldest was to do and is obliged to do, and then what did belong to the next son to be equally divided among the next.

Fifthly, my Will is -- seeing that my Children are young, and I know not how they may be exercised by affliction, before they come of age, although I hope in God's mercy towards my house, and I doo desire if my Children should be possessed of that Estate God hath given me, as I have above expressed, yet if need do require and there doth not arise sufficient out of the improvement of the estate for their comfortible bringing up, then I give full power to my Wife, which I doo make the sole Executrix of my whole estate, that also with the advice and counsel of my own sons, may sell some land, that may be sufficient for the relief of my children.

The first parcel that I think had best be put on sale, if need for requires, is that land at Norays, or half that land by John Boogby, which parcel will sell best upon due consideration and for ( ) of land, if just need should require, the land mentioned is appointed to my two youngest sons. I would not have them suffer at all, therefore, I leave it to my Wife who is my Executrix, and to my observers, to make proportionably, the rest of my children bearing their properties according to their ability and portions.

Sixthly, I bequeath one parcel of land more that I have not yet mentioned in my Will, it being a small parcel of land that I had of Robert Williams. I do hereby leave it to the custody of my Wife, she being my Executrix, either to sell towards paying of my debts, or to doo withal as she shall think best. For my Overseers, I entreat my loving friends, Sergt. Peleg Scathew and John Bridge to be my Overseers, and hand it to my Wife, if she please to choose a third, which accordingly she doth choose her brother Daniel Brewer.

John Mays, Jr. /s/

TRANSCRIPT OF THE WILL OF JOHN MAYS, JR.

We whose names are underwritten, being called to apprise the Estate of John Mays, of Roxbury, now as desire, have done as followth.

His Dwelling House	30 - 00 - 00
His barn	20 - 00 - 00
A small Out House	2 - 00 - 00
His Holmsted being about 30 acres, one acre of it is an orchard	10 - 00 - 00
Nine acres of fresh Meadow, at £ per a	90 - 00 - 00
Ploughing land	16 - 00 - 00
His other land, the same side of the road, his dwelling house stands, about fourteen acres	64 - 00 - 00
His Salt Marsh at Gravel Point, three acres	20 - 00 - 00
Fourteen acres of woodland he bought of Goodman Howe	20 - 00 - 00
His land at Woolamannpagru with all the rights to it	30 - 00 - 00
His land he bought of Goodman Morris, about 14 acres	60 - 00 - 00
His land he bought of Robert Williams, about 2 acres	2 - 00 - 00
For his Carpenter's tools and augers	00 - 12 - 00
His Chisels and one shave	00 - 15 - 00
One tenant saw, and three hand saws	00 - 17 - 00
Twenty plains, three files, and some other small iron things	01 - 10 - 00
One saddle & a pinion & two bridles	1 - 00 - 00
Horse harness, two small chains	00 - 17 - 00
Four wedges & one pair of castings	00 - 10 - 00
His household goods in the outward rooms	2 - 10 - 00
Three brass kettles, pretty well worn, two small skillets	2 - 00 - 00
And a Warming Pan	00 - 10 - 00
Three iron pots, one iron skillet, spit, gridiron, one iron frying pan, one pair tongs & sundries	1 - 16 - 00
Three platters, two drinking pots, two porringers, two basins, two chamber pots, etc.	1 - 00 - 00
His books	00 - 10 - 00
Iron pots & skillets, two stools, brine dishes, spoons	00 - 14 - 00
One bedstead, sheets, blankets, one rug, pillows & bolsters	2 - 10 - 00
His wearing clothes	3 - 10 - 00
Three cows, one mare, one yearling calf, two heifers, two shoats	
One plain board chest & box, & sundry other articles	
The whole estate amounting to	459 - 01 - 00
Debts due him about	9 - 00 - 00
And he owes about	17 - 00 - 00

November 5th, 1671 Daniel Brewer
William Gary
John Bridge

Sarah Mays made oath in Court, 4th October, 1671, that this is a true inventory of the estate of her late Husband, Recorded & compared.

A. Grant Bondall, Clerk

31st 11th mo. 1671

INVENTORY OF THE ESTATE OF JOHN MAYS, JR.

was regarded as the head of the family while his two younger brothers were growing and learning a trade.

John III and Prudence were the parents of eleven children.

JOHN	b.	Nov. 23, 1686
SAMUEL		Jan. 8, 1689
PRUDENCE		Dec. 29, 1690
EBENEZER		Oct. 19, 1692
PRUDENCE (II)		Nov. 29, 1694
HEZEKIAH		Dec. 14, 1696
SARAH		Oct. 29, 1698
NEHEMIAH		June 28, 1701
MEHETABEL		Feb. 27, 1703
ELEAZER		July 9, 1705
BENJAMIN		March 1, 1708

The first Prudence died in infancy.

While the focus of this family history is upon Elisha May and his descendants -- especially his grandson, Hezekiah -- it is important to the account to include some reporting on other Mays of Roxbury, to explain the relationships of their activities and migrations.

John May III, the first of the John Mays to be born in America, lived in Roxbury all of his life. When he died, on February 24, 1730, his remains were interred in the same cemetery where John the Elder and John II were buried.

When John May III made his will on November 1, 1729, he appointed his sons Ebenezer and Eleazer as executors and distributed to them most of his property in Roxbury. By this time all of his sons except these two and the youngest, Benjamin, had migrated from Roxbury.

John May IV and Elizabeth Child were married in Roxbury on December 18, 1711, by the Rev. Nehemiah Walter. Within a few years they moved to Woodstock, which had been known as New Roxbury to many of its settlers, coming from Roxbury as early as 1686. For many years it was doubtful whether Woodstock, when finally recognized by that name, was a part of Massachusetts or Connecticut. Connecticut won.

Around 1720, John's brother, Nehemiah, not yet 20, also went to Woodstock. There, on November 30, 1726, he was married to Mehetabel Holbrook, daughter of John Holbrook, of Pomfret.

John IV and Nehemiah are recognized as founders of the Woodstock Branch of the May family.

Eleazer May married Dorothy Davis on January 29, 1735. About five years later he migrated to Pomfret, Connecticut, after selling his house and seven acres to Benjamin Faneuil. A year and a half after the birth of their sixth child, at Pomfret, Dorothy died on April 12, 1750. Eleazer married a second wife, Abigail Sumner, on December 27, 1750. By her he had two more children.

Eleazer was thus recognized as the founder of the Pomfret Branch of the family.

Hezekiah May, fourth son of John III, moved to Wethersfield, in Connecticut, about 1720. On April 27, 1721, he and Anna Stillman were married. She was the daughter of George Stillman, selectman and representative of Hadley and later of Wethersfield.

Hezekiah was a deacon in the Congregational Church and he rendered "patriotic service" in the Revolutionary War. He is recognized as being the founder of the Wethersfield Branch of the family.

A considerable number of descendants of John May were given the name Hezekiah, most of them, probably, in honor of Hezekiah of Wethersfield, looked upon as a statesman.

Hezekiah of Wethersfield had a son Hezekiah who was a farmer and a Connecticut solder in the Revolution. Also, he had two grandsons, two great-grandsons and a great-great-grandson named Hezekiah. And there were more in other branches of the family.

Samuel May, second son of John III, married and moved westward from Roxbury, settling in Worcester County.

Ebenezer May remained in Roxbury for the rest of his life. He and Abigail Gore were married on April 3, 1718. They had eight children. He died on May 2, 1752, and was buried in the old cemetery where his father, grandfather and great-grandfather also were buried.

Benjamin May, youngest son of John III, like Ebenezer, remained in Roxbury. He and Mary Williams were married on May 4, 1737. They had five children. After his wife died in 1750, Benjamin married Abigail, widow of John Gore, who gave him three more children. Benjamin died on December 8, 1774.

Thus it was -- from eighty to ninety years after John May brought his family from England to Roxbury -- third- and fourth-generation descendants were reaching out . . . searching for better land and new homes in an expanding Colonial America.

E Gsha May

7

Elisha and Ephraim Go to Bristol County

ELISHA MAY was 30 years old when he and his brother, Ephraim, 28, went to Boston to make purchase of extensive land holdings in Rehoboth and Swansea, Bristol County, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay.

They bought from William Hewes, a chirurgeon, and his wife, Elisabeth, about twenty tracts of land, some with buildings, containing approximately six hundred acres in all. For all of this they paid Dr. Hewes the sum of "Two Hundred and Sixty pounds Current money of Newengland." The deed, close to two thousand words in length, was dated "the Tenth day of Aprill Annoqi Domini One Thousand Six Hundred Ninety & Nine In ye Eleventh Year of ye Reign of our Sovereign Lord King William ye third over England &c."

Elisha and Ephraim paid the amount -- a considerable sum of money in 1699 -- "Before ye Ensealing & Delivery of these presents," witnessed by John Whitney and Eleazer Moody. The deed makes it clear that the property was being purchased by Elisha and Ephraim "in equall halves."

Dr. Hewes appointed John Thomas, cordwainer, of Swansea (spelled Swanzey in the deed), to be "my true & Lawfull attorney" in Bristol County.

A memorandum at the end of the deed, registered in Bristol County, says:

" . . . on ye Seventh day of July Anno Domini 1699 Full Quiet and peaceable possesion and Livery of Seizen of ye within granted and Bargained premises Viz Lands houses Edifices and buildings thereon with the appurtenances thereonto Belonging was had taken given and Delivered By John Thomas ye attorney of ye within named William Hewes to ye within named Elisha & Ephraim May by virtue of ye Letter of attorney and according to the true Meaning of ye Writeing Contained In

this Deed and In Presence of those persns Whose names are hereonto Subscribed." This was witnessed by Nicholas Tanner and Aaron Clarke.

Therefore, while it seems most probable that Elisha and Ephraim had previously visited Bristol County (they surely knew what they were buying), they took possession of their properties on July 7, 1699.

Another deed, dated the following February 29, 1699, (1700 in the New Style Calendar, adopted later), was signed by the wife of Elisha, Elizabeth May, and his brother. This and other facts prove that Elisha was married and was the father of two sons, Elisha and Elijah, when he came to Bristol County. Ephraim was still unmarried.

In the document drawn up in Boston, Elisha was described as being a "Tayler"; Ephraim was termed a "Cordwainer." Both, the deed said, were "of Roxbury."

While little can be said about the life of Elisha May in the period between his father's death in 1671 and his purchase of the Bristol lands in 1699, it does seem clear that Elisha and Ephraim were reared in Roxbury -- and in accordance with their father's planning.

Elisha was 11 years old when the Suffolk Probate Court appointed John Watson and Henry Bowen as guardians over John May III, Elisha and Ephraim.

Considering the support given the Roxbury Free School by Elisha's father and grandfather, it seems certain the guardians of the sons of John May, Jr., would see that the boys received education — in the words of the apostle Eliot — "to fitt them for publicke service both in church and commonwealth." It is likely they received instruction under both Mr. Eliot and the Rev. Samuel Danforth, as well as schoolmaster John Prudden.

It seems probable that Elisha and Elizabeth were wed in Roxbury, yet no mention of the marriage is to be found in the church books or the town's vital records. And it could not be found in vital records of nearby towns. Elizabeth's surname, for that reason, is for the moment lost in time.

Elisha and Elizabeth were the parents of four children, the latter two being born in that part of Swansea which later became the town of Barrington. The children:

ELISHA	b.	circa 1694
ELIJAH	b.	circa 1697
SARAH	bap.	Oct. 21, 1699
RUTH	bap.	Mar. 12, 1704

Not long after the birth of Ruth, Elizabeth May died. The exact date is not known because the death was not found in vital records of Bristol County. Apparently, death occurred between 1704 and 1706.

Elisha's second wife also was named Elizabeth. She was Elizabeth (Walker) Emerson, whose first husband died in 1706.

One child, Benjamin, was born to Elisha by his second wife. The infant was baptized in 1709.

* * *

As stated earlier, the will of his father gave to Elisha the choice of "the land I bought of Goodman Morris" or "the land I have at Woolamannpagru."

The tract designated "Woolamannpagru" -- an Indian name, also written Woolamanpogue or Wollomonopog -- was partly within the present boundary of Massachusetts and partly within what now is Rhode Island. It became part of Rehoboth, but that which was in Norfolk County was named Wrentham by its early settlers when it was incorporated in October, 1673. Wrentham was the name of their old home in England's Suffolk County.

In his "History and Directory of Wrentham and Norfolk, Massachusetts, for 1890" (Boston, 1890), Samuel Warner said "Wollomonuppoag" is the Indian name of the plantation afterwards known as Wrentham and that Wrentham originally was part of Dedham, founded in 1636. In 1662 the land for Wrentham was bought from the Indians and in that year the proprietors voted to sell their rights in Wollomonuppoag, provided the plantation be entered on within two and a half years. (The proprietors in colonial days were the men who originally bought land to be settled. They often never settled there themselves, but had the right to govern the settlement by virtue of their ownership). In 1668 the proprietors sold more of their lands there and in 1671 the first settlements were made.

Against this background it may be seen that John May, Jr., purchased his land at "Woolamannpagru" probably between 1662 and 1668 and it carried a value of thirty pounds when his estate was inventoried in 1671.

How Woolamannpagru figures in the early life of Elisha is uncertain. When Elisha became 21, in the year 1690, the settlement of the land had commenced, Wrentham had been incorporated, and the meeting house had been built in 1682.

If Elisha claimed the land under his father's will, there is nothing which has been found in the records to prove it. Nothing appears in the land records to show it was sold by the guardians, or by Elisha or Ephraim.

At the same time nothing has been found in the records to disprove the possibility that Elisha went to Wrentham, there to meet and marry Elizabeth and living there when their sons Elisha May, Jr., and Elijah were born. However, as mentioned earlier, Elisha said Roxbury was his place of residence when he and Ephraim purchased the Bristol properties in 1699.

Another portion of Woolamannpagru afterwards became Attleboro (Attleborough), which now is in Bristol County, Massachusetts. But the vital records of Attleboro, as the records of Wrentham, shed no light on Elisha's first marriage or the birth of the first two sons.

Elisha and Ephraim were the earliest -- by about twenty years -- to migrate from the old May home in Roxbury. Accordingly, they have been recognized as being the founders of the Bristol County Branch of the John May Family.

Elisha and Ephraim settled in the Rehoboth-Swansea area twenty-three years after the conclusion of King Philip's War. "King Philip" was a haughty Indian chieftain who would not talk with any but "my brother, King Charles" of England. His war with the colonists in 1675 and 1676 was a difficult period for the people of New England. Rehoboth was the scene of bloody fighting when all the garrison houses were destroyed. After King Philip was slain by a turncoat Indian the surrender of Annawan, called the bravest of Philip's generals, was the last major incident of the war. Annawan was beheaded.

A cursory reading of the 1699 deed filed in Bristol County provides some perception of the vastness of the initial land holdings of Elisha and Ephraim. Descriptions included:

"About One Hundred & three acres of Land . . . In Newmeadow neck In Swanzey.

". . . several three acre Lots Laid out In ye Last Division of ye Newmeadow Neck & one five acre Lot . . .

"Also one five acre Lot In ye sd New Meadow Neck . . . & also one Ten Acre Lot of Meadow . . .

"One Tract or parcell of Land Containing about Ninety Acres . . . bounded . . . Easterly With ye meadow now or Late of ye sd Samuel Myler and ye River.

"Also One half of A Ten acre Lot of meadow . . . bounded . . . northerly with ye River . . .

"And On ye East Side ye neck or River aforsd One Tract or parcell of Land Containing about thirty acres . . . bounded . . . Westerly With ye Land of Joseph Carpenter . . .

"Also one Twelve acre Lot of Land Scituate Lying & being in Towoset Neck in Swanzey . . . bounded as by ye Book of

Records may At Large appear Together With five Single Xanti (?) rights of all ye undivided Land of ye aforsd township of Swanzey . . .

". . . fifteen acres of Land . . . at a place commonly called & known by ye name of Torreys Creek & in Rehoboth . . .

"And one parcell of Land Containing about six acres bounded Southerly with ye South Line of Rehoboth . . .

"One tract . . . Containing about Sixteen acres . . . in Wachamokett Creek In Rehoboth. . .

"One tract . . . at a place Commonly Called or Known by The name of ye Common field or Second Division In Rehoboth aforsd Containing about Twelve acres . . .

". . . also two hundred & Fifty pounds (acres?) Common In The aforsd Rehoboth Lands Together With all Singular ye Houses out Houses Edifices Buildings Barnes And tennancy Standing thereon . . ."

Considering that Elisha and Ephraim bought the properties "in equall halves" and divided them accordingly by acreage and value, the 1699 and subsequent land records show that Elisha and his family settled on New Meadow Neck which was then in Swansea. Later it was in the new town of Barrington which was in Massachusetts but eventually, after the death of Elisha, fell within the boundaries of Rhode Island.

Ephraim settled in Rehoboth and lived there until his death. He may have, however, lived for a time in Swansea, prior to his marriage.

Elisha and Ephraim were grantors in numerous land sales, recorded with the Registry for Bristol County.

The previously mentioned grantor deed of February 29, 1700, signed by Elisha, Elizabeth and Ephraim is one of the two earliest on record. In the one deed, the three, all of the "Town of Swanzey in the County of Bristoll," sold for the sum of four pounds "currant money of New England," a parcel of forty acres of land in Swansea to Zachariah Eddy. The deed was written "in the Twelfth year of the Reign of William the third of England, Scotland, France and Ireland."

On the same day, Elisha and Elizabeth, together with Ephraim, sold twenty acres of land in "Swanzey," abutting the land of John Cole, to Jonathan Smith.

The Rehoboth settlement was more than fifty years old when Elisha and Ephraim joined the community. The first white settler in Rehoboth was the Rev. William Blackstone. He also was the first white inhabitant of the Shawmut Peninsula, where Boston now stands. He sold his lands at Boston

Continued on Page 57

ELISHA AND EPHRAIM BUY BRISTOL COUNTY LAND

The following is a transcript of the three-page deed of April 10, 1699, in which Elisha and Ephraim May purchased numerous tracts of Rehoboth and Swansea land from William Hewes, Boston chirurgeon:

TO ALL PEOPLE Unto Whome This Present Deed of Sale Shall Come, William Hewes of Boston In ye County of Suffolk within his Majesties Province of The Massachusets Bay In New England Shyrurgeon Sendeth Greeting Know Ye that I ye sd William Hewes for & In Consideration of ye sum of Two Hundred and Sixty pounds Current money of Newengland to me In Hand well & truly Paid Before ye Ensealing & Delivery of these presents By Elisha May of Roxbury In ye County of Suffolk aforsd Tayler & Ephraim May of Roxbury aforsd Cordwainer ye Receipt Whereof to full Content & Satisfaction I do hereby acknowledg & thereof & of every part & percell thereof doe acquit Exonerate & Discharge ye Sd Elisha May & Ephraim May & both of them their & each & Every of their heirs Exectrs Admist. & Assigns forever by these presents have given granted Bargained Sould Aliened enfeoffed Conveyed & Confirmed & By these presents for my self & my heirs Doe fully freely clearly & absolutely give grant Bargain sell aliene enfeoffe Convey & Confirm unto ye sd Elisha May and Ephraim May their Heirs & assigns for Ever In Equall halves The severall tracts or Parcels of Land and meadow herein after mentioned Scituate Lying & being In & Within the Township of Swanzey & Rehoboth In ye County of Bristoll & province aforsd & Bounded & Described As followeth Viz About One Hundred & three acres of Land Scituate Lying and Being In Newmeadow neck In Swanzey aforsd bounded Southerly With ye Land of of Thomas Wood & William Howard Easterly With ye meadow now or Late of Samuel Miler & ye meadow of Joseph Kent Jonah Palmer Richard Bowen John Peck Samuel Walker & thence With a highway & northerly With ye South Line of Rehoboth & Westerly With severall three acre Lots Laid out In ye Last Diviseon of Ye Newmeadow Neck & one five acre Lot In ye Sd new meadow Bounded northerly With ye Land Layed out to Stephen Brace Easterly With ye Teachers Lott southerly With a Highway & Bounded Westerly With a Highway And Also one five acre Lot In ye sd New Meadow Neck Bounded Westerly With a highway Southerly Easterly & Northerly With Lots Laid Out In ye Last Division of ye said New Meadow Neck & also one Ten Acre Lot of Meadow be It more or Less Scituate On ye Said Newmeadow Neck being Bounded Northerly With ye meadow of ye aforsd Joseph Kent Easterly With ye salt water Southerly With ye meadow of Preserved Abell & Westerly With ye aforsd Land now or Late of ye sd Samuel Myler (Within said Bounds the highway & Bridle Ways & a Small piece of Land for ye Townsuse of about Two Acres Always to be Excepted & on ye East Side of New Meadow Neck In Swanzey aforsd One Tract or parcell of Land Containing about Ninety Acres Bounded Southerly With ye Land of Nicolas Lange Easterly by a Highway Northerly by a Highway & Easterly With ye meadow now or Late of ye sd Samuel Myler and ye River And Also One half of A Ten acre Lot of meadow be it more or Less Bounded Westerly & notherly With ye River Easterly & Southerly With ye Land of John Thomas And With ye aforsd parcell of Land Containing about ninety acres Within Sd Bounds the Highway Bridle Wayes & Landing places always to be Excepted And On ye East Side ye neck or River aforsd One Tract or parcell of Land Containing about thirty acres more or Less bounded Southerly With the Land of Widdow Mason Westerly With ye Land of Joseph Carpenter northerly With a Lot of Land & easterly With a highway mostly and also One Twelve acre Lot of Land Scituate Lying & being In Towoset Neck In Swanzey aforsd Butted & Bounded as by ye Book as by ye Book of Records may At Large appear Together With five Single Xanti rights of all ye undivided Land of ye aforsd township of Swanzey and fifteen acres of Land Scituate Lying & being at a place commonly called & known by ye name of Torreys Creek & In Rehoboth aforsd Bounded Southerly Easterly Northerly & Westerly With ye towns Common or Undivided Lands. And one parcell of Land Containing about six acres bounded Southerly with ye South Line of Rehoboth Easterly With a Highway Northerly With ye North Line of ye forty rod and Westerly With ye

Commons And One tract or Parcell of Land Containing about
Sixteen acres Scituate Lying & being in Wachamokett Creek In Rehoboth
aforsd Butted & Bounded as by ye Record may appear And One tract or parcell
of Land Scituate Lying & being at a place Commonly Called or Known by
The name of ye Common field or Second Division In Rehoboth aforsd Containing
about Twelve acres and also two hundred & Fifty pounds Common
In The aforsd Rehoboth Lands Together With all Singular ye Houses out Houses
Edifices Buildings Barnes And tennancy Standing thereon Yards Backsides Yards
orchards timbers trees Wood underwoods Stones mines minerals Waters Watercourses
Wayes Easments Seedings Profits privilidges rights Commodaties advantages
Immunities hereditemants Emoluments & appurtenances Whatsoever to ye sd Grant
and Bargained Premises & to every or any part or parcell thereof belonging
Or In any wise appertaining or therewith now used occupied or enjoyed
ampled reputed taken or known as part parts or members thereof And the
Reversion & Reversions remainder & remainders rent Isues & Income
Thereof And also all ye Estate right title Interest Inheritance Use possesion proper
Claim & Demand Whatsoever of me ye sd William Hewes & my heirs of in &
To ye Same & every part & parcell thereof with all deeds wrightings & evidence
Relateing thereto TO HAVE AND TO HOLD all ye above and before mentioned
Granted & Bargained Premises With their appurtenances & every part & parcell
Thereof (Excepting only as above excepted) Unto ye sd Elisha May and Ephraim
May their heirs & assigns That Is to Say ye One Moiety or full half part thereof
Unto ye only proper Use benefitt & behoof of him ye sd Elisha May & of his
Heirs & assigns forever and ye other moiety or full half part thereof
Unto ye only proper Use benefit & behoof of him ye sd Ephraim May and of
His heirs & assigns for ever ~~& ye other moiety~~ absolutely without any
manner of Condition Redemption or revocation In any Wise And I ye
said William Hewes for me my heirs Exectrs and Admist. doe hereby Covenant
Promise Grant & agree to & with ye sd Elisha May & Ephraim May their
Heirs & assigns & every of them In manner & form following That Is to Say
That at ye time of these presents Grant Bargain & Sale & Untill ye Ensealing
And Delevery of these presents presents I ye sd William Hewes am true
sole & Lawfull owner of all ye above Bargained premises & stand Lawfully
Seized thereof In my own proper Right of a good sure & Indefeasible
Estate of Inheritance In fee simple Without any manner of Condition made
or Limetation of Use or Uses Whatsoever so as to alter change defer or
make void the same & haveing In my self full power good Right & Lawfull
authority to grant sell convey & asure ye same unto ye sd Elisha May &
Ephraim May their heirs & assigns In manner & form aforsd and
according to ye true Intent & meaning of these presents and ye sd Elisha
May & Ephraim May their heirs & and assigns shall & may by by the
virtue of these presents from hence forth & forever hereafter Lawfully peceably & du-
ly have hold use occupie posses & enjoy ye above granted & Bargained
Premises with ye appurtenances in Equall halves as as aforsd free &
and clearly acquited exonerated & discharged of & from all & all manner of
former & other gifts grants Bargains sales Leases Leleas Mortgagege Joynter
Dowries or Judgments Exectr. Entailes fines forfietures seizures amercements
of & from all other titles troubles charges & incombrences whatsoever
and Further I do hereby Covenant promise & grant agree bind & Oblige
my self my heirs Exects & admist. from hence forth & forever hereafter to
Warrant & defend all ye above granted & bargained premises with app-
urtenances & every part & parcell thereof (Excepting only as above Excepted)
unto ye sd Elisha May and Ephraim May their heirs & assigns for ever in
Equall halves as aforsd against ye Lawfull Claimes & demands of all &
Every person & persons whomsoever & at any time or times hereafter
hereafter on Demand or Reasonable Request to give & pass such faithful &
ample assurance & confirmation of the premises unto ye sd Elisha May

and Ephraim May their heirs & assigns (at their own cost) as in Law or Equity can or may be reasonably desired or required and finally I the sd William Hewes have & hereby doe put & constitute Mr John Thomas of Swanzey afrsd Cordwainer - 4 - 11 - to be my true & Lawfull attorney For me and in my name & stead to Enter & upon the above granted and Bargained premises or any part thereof generally or in ye name of ye whole & Possesion In my name & stead generally or in ye name of ye whole to have and take & after the Sale possesion so had & taken Livery of Seizen & Possesion Thereof for me In my name & stead generally or In ye name of ye whole to give & deliver unto the sd Elisha May & Ephraim May their heirs & assigns a Certain attorney In that behalf according to ye true meaning hereof Ratifying and Confirming all & whatsoever my sd attorney shall doe or cause to be done in & conserning ye premises as fully to all Intents & purposes as If I my self had done It In Witness whereof I ye said William Hewes and Elisebeth my present wife In Testimony of her free Consent to This Bargain & sale & full relinguishment of all her Right of Dower & power of thirds of In & to ye above granted Premises have hereonto set their hands and seals the Tenth day of Aprill Annoqi Domini One Thousand Six Hundred Ninety & nine In ye Eleventh Year of ye Reign of our Sovereign Lord King William ye third over England &c

Signed Sealed and Delivered
In the Presence of us
John Whitney
Eleazer Moody

Wm Hewes /Seal/

Elisabeth Hewes /Seal/

Received the Day and year first within written
of ye within named Elisha May & Ephraim May
the sum of two hundred & sixty pounds current
money in full payment satisfaction & discharge of
the Purchase Consideration within Expresed

Wm Hewes
Elizabeth Hewes

Suffolk Ss Boston Aprill 10th 1699
The within named William Hewes and Elizabeth his wife personally appeared before me ye subscriber one of his maj justices of peace within ye County afrsd acknowledged this Instrument of Bargaine & Sale to be their free & voluntary act & deed

Timothy Proute

Memorandum that on ye Seventh day of July Anno Domini 1699
Full Quiet and peaceble possesion and Livery of Seizen of ye within granted and Bargained premises Viz Lands houses Edifices and buildings thereon with the appurtenances thereonto Belonging was had taken given and Delivered By John Thomas ye attorney of ye within named William Hewes to ye within named Elisha & Ephraim May by virtue of ye Letter of attorney and according to the true Meaning of ye Writeing Contained In this Deed In Presence of those persns Whose names are hereonto Subscribed /

Nicholas Tanner
Aaron Clarke

Received August ye 3 1741 and Recorded by
Thomas Throope Junr Recorder

(Bristol County, Mass., deeds, 30:190)

in 1634 and, in 1635, a year before the arrival of Roger Williams, built a house on the banks of the Blackstone River, three miles above Pawtucket, in Cumberland.

The Rev. Samuel Newman, who had been called to Weymouth in 1638 but found a ministerial controversy there too much for his liking, soon was looking for a place in which he could establish a religious community. He found a tract of land between the Seekonk and Palmer rivers which was called "Seacunk" by the Indians, the word meaning "black goose." Negotiations for the purchase of land for the settlement — according to the measurement of the times it was "a tract eight miles square" and embraced what now constitutes the towns of Rehoboth, Seekonk and Pawtucket -- were carried on with Massasoit, chief of the Wampanoags. The land was purchased for ten fathoms of wampum and a coat.

The Rev. Mr. Newman and fifty-eight followers came in October, 1643. The pastor, not fond of Indian names, renamed the area "Rehoboth" from a passage in Genesis which means "the Lord has made room for us."

The land was divided by drawing lots. Houses were built in what was called the "Ring of the Town," with all fences joining to form a common grazing area for cattle.

The first meeting house, built in 1646, was near the exact center of the "Ring." A second meeting house was built in 1680, close to the first. A third was constructed in 1716, alongside the second. The present church was built in 1810 and additions were made in 1947. (Illustration on page 67).

The church began as the First Church of Christ in Rehoboth. The founder was its pastor until his death in 1663. It exists today as the Newman Congregational Church of Seekonk and East Providence located in the old Rehoboth Town Square in Rumford, which is now a part of the city of East Providence.

* * *

It is important to know the history of the churches in order to know and understand Elisha May or any colonist. The church was the core of life, the center of nearly all activity and of most controversy. The minister generally was a very important person in the community.

Much dissension in religious affairs prevailed in Rehoboth from 1663 to 1666. Undoubtedly, this dissension was increased by the Rev. John Miles. He had been pastor of the first Baptist church founded at Swansea, Wales, in 1649. He was ejected from his charge in 1662 for nonconformity and fled to New England, followed by some of his adherents.

In 1663 Miles formed a church in the Wannamoisett home of John Butterworth. Other members were James Brown, Nicholas Tanner, Joseph Carpenter, Eldad Kingsley and Benjamin Alby.

TO ALL Christian People unto whom this present Deed of sale shall come, Elisha May of the Town of Swanzey in the County of Bristoll in the Province of Massachuset Bay in New England, Taylor, & Elizabeth his wife and Ephraim May his brother of the town & county aforesaid, Cordwainer, Sendeth Greeting: Know Ye that the said Elisha May and Elizabeth his wife & Ephraim May for & in consideration of the sum of four pounds current money of New England to them in hand well & freely payd before the ensealing & delivering of these presents by Zachariah Eddy of the town and county aforesaid in New England, Puller, the Receipt whereof they the said Elisha May & Ephraim his Brother Doe hereby acknowledge themselves therewith to be fully Sattisfyed and Contented And thereof & of every part & parcell thereof Doe hereby Acquitt Exonerate & fully Discharge the said Zachariah Eddy his heires Executors Administrators & Assignes & every of them for ever Have given granted Bargained sold Aliened Enfeoffed Convsyed & Confirmed And by these presents Doe fully freely clearsly & absolutely give grant Bargain sell Alien Enfeoffe convey & confirm unto him the said Zachariah Eddy his heires & Assignes for ever a certain peice or parcell of Land situate lyeing & being at a place commonly called & Known by ye name of Mattapoiset within the township of Swanzey aforesaid conteyneing forty acres be the same more or less Viz. Buttsd & Bounded to a Walnut tree marked for ye corner, then easterly by the land of ye sd Zachariah Eddy to a sapple tree which is the southeast corner then northerly to a white Oake tree which is the northeast corner; then westerly to a Red Oaks tree which is ths southwest cornar then southerly to the first tree And allso bounded to a Black Oake tree then marked for the corner then easterly to a walnut tree marked for ye corner then northerly to an Ash tree marked for ye corner then southerly to a chesenut tree marked for ye corner then westerly to the first tree as may further appear in Swanzey land Records (Page 98) And is numbered ninety two ninety three or howsoever Bounded or Reputed to be bounded Together with all & Singuler the wood underwood timber standing lyeing or growing thereon with all stones mines Minnerals water water courses herbage grass seedings rents profits priviledges commodite heridittamente & appurtenances whatsoever to the said land belonging of in any Kind apportainsing or therewith there used occupied & enjoyed and allso all the right title estate intsrest inheritance property revertion remainder claime & demand whatsoever of them the grantors their heires and Assignes of in & to all the above granted premises & every part & parcell thereof To have and to hold the said forty acres of land butted & bounded as aforesaid with all & Singuler the above granted premises with their appurtenances thereof unto the said Zachariah Eddy his heires & Assignes forever To the only proper use benefit and behoofe of him the sd Zachariah Eddy his heirs Assignes from hence forth & for evermore And the said Elisha May and Elizabeth his wife & Ephraim May for themselves and either of them their heires Executors Administrators & Assignes Doe hereby covenant promise & grant to & with the said Zachariah Eddy his heires & Assignes in manner & form following (that is to say) that at the time of the ensealeing hereof untill the Delivery of these presents that they the said Elisha May & Ephraim May are the true sole & lawfull owners of all the above granted and stands lawfull seized thereof in their own proper Right of good jura perfect & absolute Estate of Inheritance in Fee Simple according to his Majesty manner of Eastgreenwich of Kent in the Realme of England in free & common surrage & not in Capitte & Knights service but without any manner of condition revershon or Limitation whatsoever so as to Alter Change Defeat or make Voyds the same haveing in them selves full power good Right & Lawfull authority to grant sell & convsy the same in forme & manner aforesaid & that the sd Zachariah Eddy his heires and Assignes shall & may from henceforth & forever hereafter Lawfully personally & Quickly have hold use occupie posess & enjoy all the above granted premisse with their appurtenances thereof free cleare & clearsly acquited & fully discharged of & from all & all manner of form or and other gifts grants bargaines sales Leases morgages Joynturs Dowers Judgements Executions Entaylse and forfaitures & of & from all other Titles troublan chargee & incumbrances whatsoever And ye sd Elisha May & Ephraim May Doe hereby bind & oblidge themselves their heires Executors Adm/ee & Assignes for ever to warrant & defend all the above granted premises With their appurtananses thereof: Unto him the said Zachariah Eddy his heires & Assignes for ever against all the Lawfull Claimes & Demands of all person & persone whomsoever. In witness whereof the said Elisha May & and Elizabeth his wife & Ephraim May hath hereunto set to their hands & seales this Twenty ninth day of February One thousand Six Hundred Ninsty Nine or seven Hundred and in the Twelfth year of the Reign of William the third of England Scotland Franc & Ireland King Defender of the faith: Memorendum thie ed land was laid out in the year 1699

Signed sealed & Dated in the presence of us by

John Eddy

William Hamman

John West

In Swanzsy in Bristoll July ye 8th 1700 Elisha May & Ephraim May mentioned in ye above written Instrument appeared before me ye Subscriber & acknowledged ths above written Instrument to be their own free voluntary Act and Deed

Thomas Leonard, Justice

Elisha May (seal)

Ephraim May (seal)

Elizabeth May (seal)

This Entered July 12th 1709 By John Cary, Recorder.

ELISHA AND ELIZABETH SELL LAND IN 1699/1700

Transcription of deed in which Elisha and wife Elizabeth and brother Ephraim sold Swansea land on February 29, 1699/1700.

This covenanting by those united in the new Baptist church was held by the Plymouth government to be an act of contumacy and a public disturbance. The General Court of Plymouth fined three of them "for setting up a meeting without the knowledge and approbation of the court" and ordered "all persons to desist from said meetings in that place or township." If they moved their meeting "to some other place where they may not prejudice any other church, and shall give reasonable satisfaction regarding their principles, we know not that they may be permitted by this government to do so."

Accordingly, the group of Baptists organized and built their small meeting house in that same year, 1663, a short distance from the southerly line of Rehoboth, on the north side of Hundred Acre Cove.

Just before King Philip's War erupted, Indians attacked that area, burned most of the buildings and killed a number of people. Elder Miles went to Boston where he established that city's first Baptist church in 1679.

In March, 1667, the General Court of Plymouth had allowed and approved that the town granted unto Captain Thomas Willett and others "shall henceforth be called and known by the name of Swansea." The new town was to occupy Sowams -- Sowams being the Indian name for the whole of Barrington, including small portions of the towns of Rehoboth, Seekonk and East Providence -- and the upper parts of Mount Hope Neck and Touissett, Mattapoysett and probably Showamett necks. The word Sowams meant "south country" or "land on the south."

To those who were associated with him, Captain Willett proposed:

1. That no erroneous person be admitted into the township either as an inhabitant or sojourner.
2. That no man of any evil behavior, as contentious persons, &c, be admitted.
3. That none may be admitted that may become a charge to the place.

Elder Miles was asked to return to Swansea. He came back in 1680.

A committee consisting of the Rev. Mr. Miles and John Butterworth explained that "erroneous" persons included those who deny the Trinity; the union of both godhead and sinless humanity in Christ; the fulness of Christ's atonement for the elect; His Resurrection, Ascension, Intercession, and Second Coming; the inspiration of the Scriptures, or the resurrection of the dead; and all such as maintain the merit of works, consubstantiation, transubstantiation, the worship of the creature, or any doctrine which detracts from the

priestly, prophetic, or kingly office of Christ.

With Swansea established, Miles and his followers built a meeting house on Tyler Point of New Meadow Neck, south of the road connecting the two ferries. This was called "The Place of Trade," a center of business for people of Swansea and South Rehoboth and close to ship-building industry.

Swansea was founded on broad principles of civil and religious freedom. The town protected religious institutions, but did not maintain them.

Sympathy for Elder Miles and his associates allied to his church many of Congregational beliefs and tendencies. During his life, the church of Miles and the town of Swansea got on well together. There was comparative unity and peace.

When Elder Miles died on February 3, 1683, the church was without a leader. Captain Samuel Luther was one of the most influential townsmen and a member of the church from its founding. He was ordained in 1685 and became pastor as successor to Mr. Miles. However, he was not as scholarly as Elder Miles. The Congregational element found him less ready to grant the same liberal privileges as to church fellowship, infant baptism, and other things, as had been accorded them in earlier years.

Although he had been reared as a Congregationalist, Elisha May at the beginning of his residence on New Meadow Neck probably found it convenient to worship in the Miles church. That convenience soon was gone. Around 1700 the people of North Swansea agitated the removal of the meeting house to their neighborhood. That put the church on the east side of the Palmer River and considerably north of Tyler Point.

The meeting house remains at that location today, identified by a plaque as "The First Baptist Church in Swansea, Founded by John Miles, 1663."

Elisha and Ephraim May were accepted into membership of the Newman Congregational Church on February 26, 1706. The Rev. Thomas Greenwood was then its pastor (1694-1720) and most likely he was the officiating clergyman when Elisha and the widow Elizabeth Emerson were married.

Elizabeth was born in Taunton in 1675 or 1676. She was the second child born to James and Bathsheba Walker. Bathsheba was a daughter of Gilbert Brooks of Rehoboth. James Walker's father, also named James, was a son of the "Widow Walker," one of the earliest purchasers of land in Rehoboth. Her name is on the list of those who, in 1643, gave in the value of their estates for a pro rata division of the land; she gave fifty pounds. From whence the Widow Walker came

is not known. The supposition is that, becoming a widow in England, she came to New England with her younger son, Phillip, following the emigration to Massachusetts of her elder son, James, and his sister, Sarah.

The elder James Walker was born in England about 1619. He came over to the colony about 1635. As they were old enough to be of service, James and Sarah likely were indentured as servants. James's name appeared in Taunton in 1643 on a list of those between 16 and 60 able to bear arms. He, also, gave in accord with the value of his estate with the first settlers of Rehoboth. He was admitted a freeman in 1650.

James married Elizabeth Philips, daughter of William and Elizabeth (Parker) Philips. Their first child was James, Jr.

The marriage of James Walker, Jr., and Bathsheba Brooks occurred on December 23, 1673. He died on June 22, 1718. Bathsheba died on February 24, 1738. In his will James made bequests to his wife, six sons and five daughters -- one being Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Walker married Ephraim Emerson on January 7, 1696. They had two children -- a son, Theodotia, also known as Ephraim, born December 24, 1696, and a daughter, Elizabeth, who became the wife of Samuel Andrews.

Ephraim Emerson, Sr., died at age 34 on April 8, 1706, leaving an estate inventoried at three hundred and seventy-one pounds. Elizabeth was administratrix.

So it was that the widow Elizabeth Walker had two children under age 10 when she became the wife of Elisha May, who was left with four children, ranging in age from 2 to 12, when his first wife died. After their marriage, as previously mentioned, one child was born, he being Benjamin.

The removal of the Baptist church from New Meadow Neck created a problem for people living west of the Palmer River and a difficult problem for those living on what was called Phebe's -- or Peebee's -- Neck. This was the main neck of the land that became Barrington. It also was called Popanomscutt. (Peebee was one of King Philip's counselors; he was killed at Miles Bridge in the Indian attack on Swansea in June, 1675). Ultimately, however, the removal of the church proved to be a blessing; it resulted in the creation of a new town for the residents of western Swansea and a church of their own.

The policy of Plymouth Colony in allowing the Baptist church an existence on New Meadow Neck was distressful to the Bay Colony. When Sir William Phipps brought the charter which united Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies in 1692,

a new order followed -- one which interfered with the policy of Swansea people in religious concerns. The new government was strongly on the side of the Congregationalists and had little sympathy with the Baptists although it tolerated them.

Late in 1692 the General Court enacted a measure requiring "that the inhabitants of each town within this Province shall take care, from time to time, to be constantly provided of an able, learned, and orthodox minister or ministers of good conversation, to dispense the word of God to them; which minister or ministers shall be suitably encouraged, and sufficiently supported and maintained by the inhabitants of such town."

Also, it was enacted "that every minister, being a person of good conversation, able, learned, and orthodox, that shall be chosen by the major part of the inhabitants of any town, at a town meeting, duly warned for that purpose (notice being given to the inhabitants fifteen days before the time of such meeting), shall be the minister of such town; and the whole town shall be obliged to pay toward his settlement and maintenance, each man his several proportion thereof."

The legislation struck a hard blow at the Baptist church in Swansea for it was not a church recognized by the ruling faith of the province, the minister had not been chosen by the town, the church was not supported by the taxable estates of the town, and it did not have "an able, learned, and orthodox" minister in Elder Luther.

Puritan Massachusetts expected each town to support a church and minister of the Congregational faith. Baptist Swansea had no such intentions. Plymouth Court had recognized Elder Luther as the authorized minister of Swansea, but the Bristol Court could not easily overturn such an endorsement.

One option was open to those of the Congregational faith who in part had attended services in the Baptist church on New Meadow Neck; that was to seek division of the old town of Swansea and the formation of a church "on the westward end of Swansea."

Elisha May was one of the leaders in this movement.

When the General Court of Massachusetts Bay met in Boston on May 30, 1711, it had before it a petition signed by Elisha and twenty-eight others. The petitioners, saying they were "under the deplorable privations thereof, do most humbly and earnestly petition this Honored Court that some methods may be taken . . . for our relief."

They said "if the Honorable General Court do in mercy and

pity prevent (its sorrow and misery) by granting us a township according to the limits of Capt. Samuel Low's military company in Swansea, thereby enabling us to settle and maintain a pious, learned and orthodox minister for the good of us and our posterity, God will be glorified, Christ's kingdom enlarged and will oblige your most humble petitioners ever to pray."

The reference to "deplorable privation" of a "pious, learned, orthodox minister" carried special importance in that Elder Luther, although he was a descendant of the great reformer, was really an unlettered layman who had moved from the plough to the pulpit.

The petition touched off a heated feud in Swansea.

After reading the petition on June 7, 1711, the court ordered that the selectmen of Swansea be served with a copy and that the parties would be heard in the next session of the court in Boston.

Swansea's selectmen called a town meeting for July 7, 1711, at which, when the question was put to a vote, the proposal for western Swansea's secession was rejected almost unanimously. It was then voted "that the town remain as now bounded, one town as it is and hath been enjoyed."

A lengthy response was prepared for the General Court, dated July 9, 1711, in which the selectmen said ". . . it seems very strange to us considering that there was care taken in the foundation of this town, how the minister should be maintained in this town of Swansea by a mutual agreement made and confirmed by those gentlemen that the General Court of Plymouth impowered and the Church of Christ then gathered and assembling in said town, and confirmed by all the proprietors of said town to prevent all troubles and discords arising for the future of this nature . . ."

"We see no advantage in breaking our town," replied the selectmen, "but increasing a charge to no profit; our township being small and granted by the General Court for our township. We desire that it so remain and every conscies person may enjoy their liberty and just rights according to the said grant and the covenant and agreement pursuant thereunto which we hitherto have done."

The name of the Rev. Samuel Luther headed the remonstrants in "the column of ancient first proprietors."

The selectmen of Swansea won the first skirmish. The court, in council on October 24, 1711, ruled, "This Court see not reason to divide Swansea into two distinct towns, but approve the good & Laudable Inclinations of the Petitioners to Encourage Religion in that part; and recommend to them

1711

A PETITION

To His Excellency Joseph Dudley, Esq., Captain-General and Governor-in-chief in and over His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay in N. E., the Honorable Council and Representatives in General Court assembled at Boston this thirtieth day of May:

The petition of us the subscribers, inhabitants on the westward end of Swansea, most humbly sheweth, that among all the outward and external blessings with which the God of all mercy blesseth any people with all in this world, that of the House of God is among them; the Gospel purely preached and the ordinances of Christ's kingdom duly administered and fathers and children settled under pastoral watch care and government, under pious learned orthodox ministers being in our esteem the greatest.

And we, your petitioners, being under the deplorable privations thereof, do most humbly and earnestly petition the Honored Court that some methods may be taken (as in wisdom may be thought best) for our relief, we being assured of this Honorable General Court's power and good will to help in such cases, from their repeated acts of the like nature, do the more freely open our malady which bespeaks pity and cure. Not to mention the ill circumstances, which our different opinions (in matters of religion from our neighbors) bring our estates under, in whose power they are in all taxes (though bad enough of itself) is yet little and light compared with the bitterness we feel at present, and fear for the future for the very mention of no settled minister, learned and orthodox, no Church of Christ settled in order, no pastor to feed Christ's lambs among us; this as we believe is an uncomfortable thought unto all the holy and reverend ministers of Christ that know our state. So it is a heart-breaking thought to us to think, that when we are called out of this world to consider in what state we leave our posterity exposed to a ruinating enticement from pure gospel and gospel ordinances. All which sorrow and misery either felt or feared, if the Honorable General Court do in mercy and pity prevent by granting us a township according to the limits of Capt. Samuel Low's military company in Swansea, thereby enabling us to settle and maintain a pious, learned and orthodox minister for the good of us and our posterity, God will be glorified, Christ's kingdom enlarged and will oblige your most humble petitioners ever to pray.

Signed,

Samuel Low	Thomas Turner	William Corbett
Daniel Allen	Joseph Chaffee	John Toogood
Benj. Viall	Thomas Tiffany	Samuel Jay
Israel Peck	Jonathan Viall	John Rogers
Samuel Humphrey	Ebenezer Allen	Joshua Phinney
Zachariah Bicknell	John Chaffee	Wm. Salisbury
Nathaniel Peck	Josiah Tickner	Wm. Salisbury, Jr.
James Smith	Daniel Allen, Jr.	Jonathan Phinney
Benj. Carey	Obadiah Pettis	Ebenezer Tiffany
Simon Davis	Elisha May	

PETITION OF ELISHA MAY AND OTHERS TO GENERAL COURT

the Establishment & Support of a learned orthodox minister of good Conversation and to Endeavor a subscription for his comfortable and honorable maintenance."

On June 18, 1712, the Massachusetts General Court heard another petition from "the Inhabitants of the lands on the West side of the town of Swansea, praying to be made a township."

Again they were opposed by fellow townsmen and the selectmen.

The issue of the establishment of a Congregational Church under "a learned orthodox minister of good conversation," in accordance with the advice of the court, was a foremost topic among the people for the next five years.

Then, on May 14, 1717, a Swansea town meeting was called to consider "an answer to a petition presented to ye town at sd meeting by some of ye inhabitants on ye west side of New Meadow river in sd Town proposed to Rais six score pounds to support the ministrey or devid sd Town or that they might be a precinct."

The townsmen blocked the proposal.

Once again, the General Court in October, 1717, received "A petition of Saml. Humphrey, Josiah Torrey and Zachariah Bicknell, agents for the society of the West part of Swansea, showing that the said society are in great Difficulties with respect to their publick affairs, especially as to the supporting of the public worship of God amongst them, that they have long ago built a meeting house for that service and for the most part maintained an orthodox minister among them, yet by reason of the Difference of opinion between them, and the most part of the great town of Swansea, and their not being sett off from the said Town as a district Township and Precinct, they are not able to settle a minister among them."

A hearing was held on November 18.

The third effort succeeded.

The court, in council on November 18, 1717, issued the order:

> "Upon a full hearing had before the Court upon the petition of Josiah Torrey, Z. Bicknell, and Samuel Humphrey, &c., agents for the society in the west part of Swansea, the 15th currant:
>
> Resolved, That Phebe's Neck and New Meadow Neck within the town of Swansea be, and hereby is, erected into a township by the name of Barrington, and the inhabitants thereof are vested with all powers, rights, and privi-

leges that other towns within this Province have or by law ought to have and enjoy."

So the town of Barrington was created in 1717.

Elisha May was an active citizen in the early government of the town. He was elected grand juror in 1719. In 1728 he was appointed tithingman. In 1729 he was constable. He was fence viewer in 1734. And in 1736 he was surveyor. His son Benjamin was surveyor in 1742 and son Elijah was tithingman in 1743.

The origin of the Barrington Congregational Church preceded the General Court's ruling on the town. It was formed soon after 1710 and the Rev. James Wilson was its minister. The first house of worship was west of the Barrington River "on the main road just south of Maxfield's corner, on the north corner lot." That places it on a present street which is between Rumstick Road and the river.

The first meeting house was taken down and in 1739 was rebuilt in its present location, which is approximately two and a half miles northwest of the original site.

The Rev. Peleg Heath, a native of Roxbury as was Elisha May, was absent from Barrington on the day of the removal. Historian James N. Arnold wrote that the pastor, when asked by remonstrants why he allowed the house to be taken down and carried away, replied:

"Ah! The Israelites, under Aaron, made a golden calf while Moses was in the Mount, so this people have done this in my absence and I know not the reason for it."

Mr. Heath was minister from 1728 to 1740, but continued to live in Barrington until his death in 1748.

In 1806 the church erected its third — and present — meeting house on nearly the same site. It was, however, extensively remodeled in 1851 and an extension was added to the east end in 1888 to make room for a pipe organ.

Meanwhile, devout people who had settled along the upper Palmer River in Rehoboth found it difficult to travel the long distance necessary to attend worship every Sunday at the Newman Church so far away. Some of these people petitioned the General Court in 1711 to have the town divided into two separate precincts for the support of the ministry. The people in the older part of Rehoboth were opposed. The rivalry did not end until two towns were formed in 1812, the year after a "fighting town meeting."

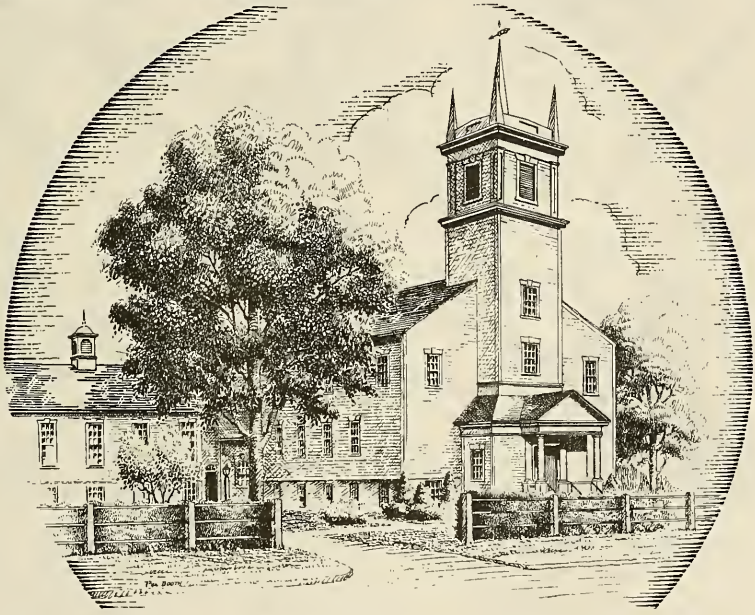
However, the General Court in May, 1713, recommended to Rehoboth that it raise a hundred and twenty pounds for the support of two ministers — one at Palmer River.

In 1717 the Palmer River families began construction of a

meeting house in their part of Rehoboth. It was built on a three-acre site on the east side of the river (on what now is Lake Street), about a half-mile north of the Orleans Manufacturing Company mills.

"The Second Church in Rehoboth" was organized on November 29, 1721, consisting of ten members — the Rev. David Turner, Elisha May, Thomas Ormsby, Jathniel Peck, Samuel Peck, Benjamin Wilson, Solomon Millard, Samuel Fuller, William Blanding and Joseph Wilson. Elisha May and Thomas Ormsby were chosen as deacons and each served in that position for a decade or more. The worshippers, it was decided, were to be seated with discrimination, according to dignity, age, and liberality towards the building and supporting of the church.

The Rev. David Turner, a native of Scituate, graduated from Harvard in 1718. He later studied medicine and practised to some extent during his ministry. He received one hundred pounds for a settlement.



ONE OF AMERICA'S OLDEST CHURCHES

A drawing of the present Newman Congregational Church, U. C. C., of Seekonk and East Providence, which was established in 1643 in a town square in Rehoboth. It is in Rumford, now part of East Providence, Rhode Island. Elisha and Ephraim May were accepted into membership in 1706.

WHERE ELISHA LIVED AND DIED

This is the Barrington Preservation Society's map of the town of Barrington, Rhode Island, where Elisha May lived on New Meadow Neck from 1699 until his death in 1744. New Meadow Neck is the land on the east side of the town — between the Barrington and Palmer rivers. Elisha's body was interred in the Tyler Point Cemetery located near the southern point of the neck, where the two streams join to become the Warren River.

Ephraim May

8

Citizen of Rehoboth, Ephraim Dies at 50

EPHRAIM MAY, Elisha's younger brother, left Roxbury in 1699 with Elisha to take possession of the extensive land holdings they had acquired in Bristol County.

When Elisha and Elizabeth, his wife, and Ephraim, his brother, sold a forty-acre tract at Mattapoiset "within the township of Swanzey" on February 29, 1699 (1700 in the New Style calendar), Ephraim was described in the grant as being a "Cordwainer" and a resident of "Swanzey" (Swansea).

At this time Ephraim was 29 years of age, unmarried and probably living temporarily with Elisha and Elizabeth.

Ephraim, as reported earlier, was born in Roxbury -- in that part of the town identified as Jamaica Plain -- on December 23, 1670. Pastor Eliot entered his record of Ephraim's baptism in his diary (in the style of the Julian calendar which was still in use). He wrote:

> "Moneth 10, day 26, 1670 -- Ephraim May, son of John May."

After settling in Bristol County, Ephraim remained there for the rest of his life. In their division of the lands they had bought, Elisha chose to live in Swansea (later to become Barrington) while Ephraim took property which mostly was in Rehoboth (and continued to be Rehoboth after various changes in boundaries and names).

In 1703 (although the record has not been found) Ephraim married Hannah Maccane, a daughter of William and Ruth (Killam) Maccane.

Hannah gave birth to a daughter on October 1, 1704, in Rehoboth. The child was christened Hannah May.

Soon thereafter, Ephraim's wife died.

Little Hannah May was baptized on February 12, 1706. It was the same day in which Ephraim and Elisha were accepted into the Newman Congregational Church.

On April 17, 1708, intention to marry was posted by Ephraim and Deliverance Peck of Swansea. She was a daughter of Israel Peck. They were married in Rehoboth on June 9.

Four children were born to Ephraim and Deliverance:

EPHRAIM, JR.	b.	Nov. 24, 1709
DELIVERANCE		Dec. 5, 1711
NAOMA		Oct. 29, 1714
BETHIAH		Nov. 16, 1716

Naoma, spoken of as "Naomy" by Ephraim, was only 7 years old, and Bethiah was not yet 5, when Ephraim realized he did not have much more time in this life. On September 1, 1721, at age 50, he then "being Sick and Weak in Body, but of Sound and Perfect Mind & Memory," Ephraim had his will written. Joseph and Nicholas Peck, related to Ephraim by way of his marriage to Deliverance, and Elisha, his brother, were witnesses to the will. Deliverance was named executrix.

Ephraim died soon thereafter. The will was entered into probate on November 16, 1721.

Each of his five children was named in the will.

To his daughter Hannah, Ephraim bequeathed "a Certain Lot of Land Lying in ye Township of Rehoboth" on the highway to Taunton. Also he left to Hannah "a Silver Cup with the Bed and Beding wch was her own mothers" and two cows and six sheep, all to be delivered to her when she became 18 years of age. Hannah was 17 when her father died.

Deliverance, "my Dearly beloved wife," was given "my Bible and all the Silver money which I have in my House as also the Improvement of my Whole Estate untill my Son Ephraim be Twenty One Years of Age."

To his daughters Deliverance, "Naomy" and Bethiah he bequeathed each the sum of "Fourty Pounds in money or as money," to be paid to each when she attained the age of 20 years.

Ephraim left to his only son, Ephraim, "all my Lands and Housing lying and being in Rehoboth aforesd Wth all my Rights in the Undivided Lands and also my Salt Marsh in Barrington wth all the Priviledges thereto belonging." Also, he gave to him the "Best" of his "wareing appairel," his shoemaker's tools, his gun, all of his husbandry tools, his sword and cane, and two small books: "A Spelling Book & a Military Book."

Following Ephraim's death the widow Deliverance continued to live in Rehoboth to rear her under-age children.

Mention is made of her in the minutes of the Rehoboth Town Meetings in 1726. The first item concerned the complaint that there was "a mulatto man Named Aron Stephens" and "Allso a woman Named Mary Grofee" who was very likely to be a town charge. Widow Deliverance May was warned she was "not to Intertaine them any Longer."

The entry, in full, was as follows:

[*Rehoboth Town Meetings*, Book II, p. 219].

21 Feb. 1725/6—"To the Cunstables of the Town of Rehoboth or Either of them Greeting Whereas there hath bin Complaint made to us the Subscribers Selectt men of the Town of Rehoboth that there is at ye houfe of the widow Deliverance may a mulatto man Named Aron Stephens Lately Come from Newport as he Saith & Allfo a woman Named mary Grofee Lately Cume from Cunninicutt who is very Likely to be a Town Charge these are therefore to Require you to warn Sd persons forthwith to Depart out of the Town of Rehoboth and Likewise to warn Sd widow May not to Intertaine them any Longer at the house and make Timely Return of ye Warent to our Selve given under our hands ye 21st Day of february Anno Domini 1725/6 and in ye Twelf year of his majefties Reign & purfuant to a warrant to me Directed from the Selecttmen of ye Town of Rehoboth I have warned all the perfons within mentioned by me

Nehemiah Millerd Cunstable

"Entered March ye 30th 1726
p^r me Dan^ll Carpenter Clerk

Sam^ll Brown
Abiah Carpenter
Dan^ll Carpenter"

The second entry was quite different. At the meeting of December 1, 1726, it was reported at the Town Meeting:

"Widow Deliverance May, of Rehoboth, takes up a stray red colored ox."

There was no report as to what happened to the ox.

When Deliverance May died she was buried in the churchyard of the Newman Congregational Church in a grave alongside that of Ephraim. It is believed that Ephraim's first wife also was buried there.

Hannah, Ephraim's eldest daughter, became the wife of Joseph Chaffee a few years following the death of her father. Joseph, born on September 17, 1701, was the son of John and Sarah (Hill) Chaffee.

Joseph and Hannah settled on a farm at Woodstock, Connecticut, where Hannah gave birth to ten children:

SARAH	b.	Jan. 18, 1729
JOSEPH		Jan. 9, 1731
EPHRAIM		1731
BENJAMIN		July 10, 1732

ISAIAH	1733
ASA	June 5, 1734
COMFORT	Mar. 20, 1738
JONATHAN	Mar. 19, 1740
HANNAH	June 17, 1742
DARIUS	Mar. 23, 1743

Life in colonial New England, especially in unprotected farmlands, was dangerous and difficult. Three of the Chaffee boys -- Joseph, Ephraim and Isaiah -- were killed by Indians.

About 1759, after more than thirty years of residence in Woodstock, Joseph and Hannah moved to South Wilbraham, Massachusetts. He died there on March 15, 1760. The widow Hannah died twenty-four years later, on May 26, 1784. Both were buried at Wilbraham.

Ephraim May, Jr., who inherited his father's lands in Rehoboth, married Ruth Wilmarth of Rehoboth on December 23, 1731. The wedding ceremony was performed by the Rev. David Turner of the Second Church of Rehoboth (Congregational) of which Ephraim's Uncle Elisha was a deacon at the time.

Vital Records of Rehoboth list seven children born to Ephraim and Ruth:

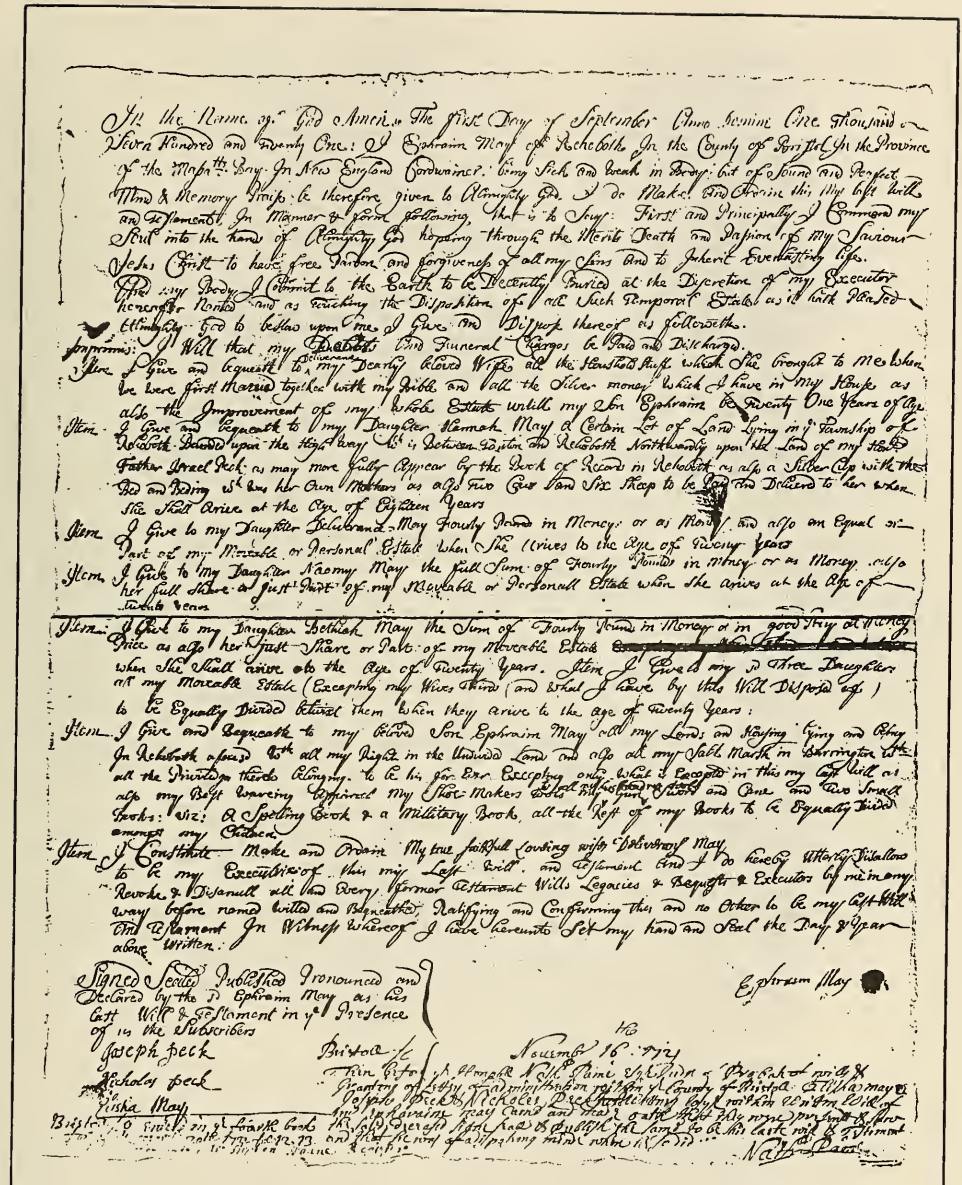
DELIVERANCE	b.	Nov. 15, 1733
EPHRAIM III		Sep. 29, 1736
RUTH		Sep. 9, 1738
DANIEL		Dec. 18, 1741
JOHN		May 28, 1743
MARY		Sep. 12, 1745
NATHANIEL		Mar. 13, 1748

The three daughters of Ephraim May, Sr., by his wife Deliverance, all married.

Daughter Deliverance became the wife of Thomas Peck on January 1, 1728/9.

Naoma married Benjamin Trissell in Barrington on March 11, 1736.

Bethiah, who was reared by an appointed guardian, her maternal uncle, Nathaniel Peck, of Barrington, became the wife of Ebenezer Truesdell, of Pomfret, Connecticut, on March 20, 1740. They had five children. Bethiah died in Dudley, Massachusetts, on November 26, 1750.



WILL OF EPHRAIM MAY, DATED 1 SEPTEMBER 1721

In the Name of God Amen. The first Day of September Anno Domini One Thousand Seven Hundred and Twenty One: I Ephraim May of Rehoboth In the County of Bristol In the Province of the Massatts. Bay In New England Cordwainer, being Sick and Weak in Body, but of Sound and Perfect Mind & Memory Praise be therefore given to Almighty God, I do Make and Ordain this my last Will and Testament, In manner & form following, that is to Say: First and Principally I Commend my Soul into the hands of Almighty God hopeing through the Merits Death and Passion of my Saviour Jesus Christ to have free pardon and forgiveness of all my Sins and to Inherit Everlasting life. And my Body I Commit to the Earth to be Decently Buried at the Discretion of my Executor hereafter named and as touching the Disposition of all Such Temporal Estate as it hath Pleased Almighty God to bestow upon me I Give and Dispose thereof as followeth.

Imprimis: I Will that my Debts and Funeral Charges be Paid and Discharged.

Item: I give and bequeath to Deliverance my Dearly beloved Wife all the Houshold Stuff which She brought to me when we were first married together with my Bible and all the Silver money which I have in my House as also the Improvement of my Whole Estate untill my Son Ephraim be Twenty One Years of Age

Item: I give and bequeath to my Daughter Hannah May a Certain Lot of Land Lying in ye Township of Rehoboth upon the Highway wch is Between Tanton and Rehoboth Northwardly upon the Land of my Honrd. Father Israel Peck as may more fully appear by the Book of Records in Rehoboth as also a Silver Cup with the Bed and Beding wch was her own mothers as also two Cows and Six Sheep to be Paid and Delivered to her when she shall arive at the Age of Eighteen Years

Item I give to my Daughter Deliverance May Fourty Pounds in Money or as Money and also an Equal or Part of my Moveable or Personal Estate when She arives to the Age of Tweny Years

Item I give to my Daughter Naomy May the full Sum of Fourty Pounds in money or as money also her full share or just Part of my moveable or Personall Estate when she arives at the Age of twenty years

Item I give to my Daughter Bethiah May the Sum of Fourty Pounds in Money or in good things at money Price as also her just Share or Part of my moveable Estate when She Shall arive at the Age of Twenty Years. Item I Give to my sd three Daughters all my moveable Estate (Excepting my wives thirds and what I have by this Will Disposed of) to be Equally Divided betwixt them when they arive to the age of twenty Years.

Item I Give and Bequeath to my beloved Son Ephraim May all my Lands and Housing lying and being In Rehoboth aforesd Wth all my Rights in the Undivided Lands and also all my Salt Marsh in Barrington wth all the Priviledges thereto belonging, to be his for Ever Excepting only what is Excepted in this my last Will as also my Best wareing appairel my Shoe-makers tools my gun/ to all my husbandry tools/ Sword and Cane and two Small Books: viz: A Spelling Book & a Military Book, all the Rest of my Books to be Equally Divided amongst my Children

Item I Constitute Make and Ordain My true faithfull Loveing wife Deliverans May to be my Executrix of this my Last will and testament and I do hereby utterly Disallow Revoke & Disanull all and Every former testament wills Legacies & Bequests & Executors by me in any way before named willed and Bequeathed, Ratifying and Confirming this and no Other to be my last Will and Testament In Witness whereof I have hereunto Set my hand and Seal the Day & Year above written:

Signed Sealed Published Pronounced and Declared by the sd Ephraim May as his last Will & Testament in ye Presence of us the Subscribers
Joseph Peck
Nicholas Peck
Elisha May

Ephraim May (S)

TRANSCRIPT OF EPHRAIM MAY'S WILL

9

Deacon Elisha May, Dies in Barrington

ON AUGUST 21, 1744, death came to Elisha May, the grand old man of the May family in Bristol County. He died at his home on New Meadow Neck, called Chachacust by the Indians.

After the funeral the body of Elisha was buried in Tyler Point Cemetery at the end of the neck. Why there instead of the Rehoboth churchyard cemetery? The one at Tyler Point is the churchyard of the old Miles Baptist meeting house — and it may be the place where Elisha buried his first wife. (There is a grave beside that of Elisha; there was a headstone, but it was broken off and then carted away many years ago. There is no record of it).

Elisha's granite gravestone, still legible after two hundred and forty years, bears this epitaph:

In Memory of
M^{r}. Elisha May, one
of ye first Deacons
of ye 2^{d}. Church of
Rehoboth, Deceas^{d}
ye 21st Day of August
1744 in ye 76^{h} Year
of his Age

Elisha's will, dated March 3, 1743 and filed on September 10, 1744, named "my eldest son Elisha May and my son Simon Burr my executors." Simon Burr was his son-in-law, but it was common practice at the time to speak of son-in-law as a "son," although the legal draftsman would also frequently add that such son was "husband of my daughter (naming her)."

IN MEMORY OF ELISHA MAY

This is the gravestone of Elisha May in Tyler Point Cemetery in Barrington, Rhode Island. It has sunk about seven inches into the ground, burying three lines of the inscription which tell date of death and age: "ye 21st Day of August 1744 in ye 76th Year of his age." The epitaph is in excellent condition considering that it is nearly two and a half centuries old. The stone, 16 inches wide and 19 inches high, is a fine specimen of the 18th Century stonecutter's art.

In his will Elisha provided for his widow, leaving her "one third part of ye income of my Rale Estate as ye Law directs and ye best roome in ye house . . . dureing her naturall Life." He also left to her a third part of his personal estate.

Bequests were made to "my two eldest sons Elisha May and Elijah May," to "son Benjamin May," to "my five grand children which my daughter Sarah Allen left," to "my grand daughter Sarah Allen one of ye five grand children" (apparently favored by Elisha), and to "my daughter Ruth Burr."

Edward Luther and his wife, Elisabeth, and Daniel Sallisbury were witnesses to Elisha's last will and testament.

An inventory compiled by Peres Bradford, William Turner and Job Mason, appraisers, was sworn to on December 10, 1744. It listed his personal estate at a little over two hundred and fifty-two pounds. The value of his lands and buildings was appraised at eleven hundred pounds.

Unfortunately, a family dispute concerning the estate was put before the court.

On February 14, 1745, Nathanael Hubbard, judge of the probate of wills for Bristol County, ordered the appearance of Elizabeth May, the widow, Benjamin May, her son by Elisha, and Joseph Allen, husband of Elisha's deceased daughter, Sarah, to respond to charges made by Elisha May, Jr., and Simon Burr, the executors. In the order Judge Hubbard said the court had "great reason to suspect that the said Elizabeth May, Joseph Allen and Benjamin May have Concealed or Imbezled Considerable part of the goods or chattles" of the estate. They were instructed to make appearance "on the second Monday of March next" and the court warned "faile not of your Appearance on the Perril of the Law."

Records of the court contain a sworn statement, signed by Benjamin May, then of Attleboro, at an appearance on March 12, in which Benjamin "did declare upon oath that he had a Bond delivered to him from his father Elisha May, Due from Ephraim Emerson, for Aboute Twenty Pounds which he saith He doth not know what is become of it unless his Wife gave it to his father, which to the Best of his Remembrance she told him she Had given to him, and as to A Quiltd saddle that they suspect that I have Conveyed Away that my father gave me aboute seven years Before his death. As to the Plow Irons and horse Chaines he sath that he Bought them of his father, and as to the Rest of the things that are suspected to be Conveyed Away I do upon oath declare that I have not directly or indirectly imbesled Concealed or Conveyed away any of them nor any other of the money goods or Chattels Left by the Testator."

Continued on Page 81

In ye Name of God Amen the Third Day of March 1742/3 I Elisha May
of Barrington in ye County of Bristoll in New England yeoman being in good
helth in body and perfect mind and Memory, Thanks begivin unto God Therefore
calling to mind ye Mortality of my Body and Knowing that it is appointed
for all men once to Dye do Make and Ordain this my Last Will & Testament
that is to say Principally and first of all I give and Recommend my soul
into ye Hands of God that gave it and my Body I recommend to ye Earth to be
Buried in decent Christian Burial at ye discretion of my Executors nothing
doubting but at ye Generall Resurrection I shall receive ye same again by
the mighty Power of God and as touching such Worldly Estate where with
it hath pleased God to Bless me in this Life I give demise and dispose of
same in ye following Manner and form.

I will that first of all my just Debts and funerall Charges be paid
Imprimis I give to my wife Elizabeth one Third part of ye income of my Rale
Estate as ye Law directs and ye best roome in ye house with ye use of half the
cellar and well and Ouen and liberty of ye yard before ye door to pass in &
out Dureing her Naturall Life and a Third part of my personal Estate
after my Debts be paid I give to my Wife.

Item I give to son Benjamin May and his Assigns all my Rights in ye undivid-
ed Land in Reohoboth and Twenty Pounds in bills of Publick Credit on the
Old Tenor at ye Vallue as they pass at ye Date of these Presents to be paid
Twelve Months after my Decas

Item I give to my son Elijah May Two Acres of salt marsh or Meadow Lying
on New meadow Neck in Barrington ye southeasterly part of my Meadow & also
six Acres of Land in S Barrington by ye Round as bounded by Record to him and
his Assigns for ever.

Item I give to my five grand Children which my Daughter Sarah Allen left Twenty
Pounds to Each of them to be paid by my Executors as they come to ye age of Twenty
one years one year after my Decease and Likewise I give to my grand Daughter
Sarah Allen one of ye five Grand Children Leather bed and beding to be paid to her att
Marrige or at ye Age of Eighteen my will is that ye Twenty Pounds apiece shall be
on ye Old Tenor as it now passeth

my will is that my two Eldest sons Elisha May and Elijah May shall have all my appar-
-rel both wollen and Linnin and my books to be Divided amongst my surviveing Children

Item I give to my Eldest son Elisha May and to my Daughter Ruth Burr all my Rale
Estate my housings and Lands in Barrington also my salt Meadow Excepting only
what is by this my Last will Disposed of to them and theire Assigns for ever and
and also all my Personal Estate which shall be left when my Debts and funeral
Charges are paid And I likewise Constitute make and Ordain my Eldest son
Elisha May and my son Simon Burr my Executors to this my last will and
Testament and I do hereby disalow revoke and disanul all and every other former
Testament, Wills Legases and Bequests Executors by me in any wais before Named
willed and Bequeathed Ratifying and Confirming this and no other to be my last
will and Testament In Witness whereof I have here unto set my hand and
seal ye Day and Year above written

Signed sealed Published pronounced
and Declared by the said Elisha May
as his last will and Testament in ye
Presence of us the subscribers

Elisha May

Elisabeth Luther
Daniel Lacelsbury
Edward Luther

WILL OF ELISHA MAY, DATED 3 MARCH 1742/3

In ye Name of God Amen the third day of March 1742/3 I Elisha May of Barrington in ye county of Bristoll in New England yeoman being in good helth in body and perfect mind and memory, thanks be givin unto God therefore calling to mind ye mortality of my Body and knowing that it is appointed for all men once to dye do make and Ordain this my last Will & Testament that is to say principally and first of all I give and Recommend my soul into ye Hands of God that gave it and my Body I recommend to ye Earth to be Buried in decent Christian Burial at ye discretion of my Executors; nothing doubting but at ye Generall Resurrection I shall receive ye same again by the Mighty Power of God and as touching such Worldly Estate where with it hath pleased God to Bless me in this Life I give demise and dispose of same in ye following manner and form.

I will that first of all my just debts and funerall charges be paid Imprimis I give to my wife Elizabeth one third part of ye income of my Rale Estate as ye Law directs and ye best roome in ye house with ye use of helf the cellar and well and Oven and liberty of ye yard before ye door to pass in & out dureing her naturall Life and a third part of my personal Estate -- after my debts be paid I give to my Wife.

Item I give to son Benjamin May and his Assigns all my Rights in ye undivided Land in Reohoboth and twenty pounds in bills of Publick Credit on the Old Tenor at ye vallue as they pass at ye date of these presents to be paid twelve months after my decas

Item I give to my son Elijah May two acres of salt marsh or meadow lying on Newmeadow Neck in Barrington ye southeasterly part of my meadow & also six acres of Land in sd Barrington by ye Round pond as bounded by Record to him and his Assigns for ever

Item I give to my five grand children which my daughter Sarah Allen left twenty pounds to each of them to be paid by my Executors as they come to ye age of twenty one years one year after my deceass and Likewise I give to my grand daughter Sarah Allen one of ye five grand children festher bed and beding to be paid to her att marriage or at ye age of Eighteen My will is that ye twenty pounds apiece shall be on ye Old Tenor as it now passeth

My will is that my two eldest sons Elisha May and Elijah May shall have all my apparrel both wollen and linnin and my books to be divided amongst my surviving children

Item I give to my eldest son Elisha May and to my daughter Ruth Burr all my Rale Estate my housings and Lands in Barrington also my salt meadow excepting only what is by this my Last Will disposed of to them and theire Assigns for ever and and also all my personal Estate which shall be left when my debts and funeral charges are paid And I likewise constitute make and Ordain my Eldest son Elisha May and my son Simon Burr my Executors to this my last will and Testament and I do hereby disalow revoke and disanul all and every other former Testament, Wills Legacies and Bequests Executors by me in any wais before Named willed and Bequeathed Ratifying and Confirming this and no other to be my last will and Testament In Witness whereof I have here unto set my hand and Seal ye day and year above written

Elisha May (seal)

Signed Sealed Published pronounced and declared by the said Elisha May as his last will and Testament in ye presence of us the subscribers:

Elisabeth Luther
Daniel Sallisbury
Edward Luther

filed September ye 10th 1744

TRANSCRIPT OF ELISHA MAY'S WILL

A full & true Inventory of the whole Estate of Elisha May Late of Barrington in the County of Bristol yeoman Deceas'd, so far as is come to the Hands & Knowledge of the Executors of the Will of the said Deceas'd; Taken and appriz'd this fifth Day of November 1744, as followeth viz.

Imprs	His apparrel	18 · 14 · 6
Item	His Books	04 · 00 · 0
Item	Cash	04 - 10 · 0
Item	Three Beds and Furniture belonging to them	50 · 07 · 0
Item	Brass Ware	08 - 11 - 0
Item	Pewter Ware	08 - 7 - 6
Item	Iron Ware	07 - 6 - 0
Item	A Gun Barrel, & old Iron	01 - 13 - 0
Item	Earthern, Stone Ware	00 - 12 - 0
Item	Cask & other wooden Ware	05 · 05 · 9
Item	Two Glass Bottles	00 · 02 · 0
Item	One Looking Glass	00 - 05 - 0
Item	Two Candlesticks	00 - 07 - 6
Item	Chairs	03 - 10 - 0
Item	Tables	02 - 11 - 0
Item	Three Chests	03 - 15 - 0
Item	A Reel, & Winders	01 - 00 - 0
Item	Indian Corn, oates, Barley & wheat	17 · 06 · 0
Item	Butter, Hogs-fat, & cheese	03 · 09 · 0
Item	Sheeps wool, Flax, & Towe & worsted yarn	06 - 06 - 4
Item	A Pillion	00 - 05 - 0
Item	Table Linnen	00 - 16 · 0
Item	Scales & weights	00 - 10 - 0
Item	Three Sickles two Houghs, & a Spade	01 - 01 - 0
Item	Two Cows, & a Pair of Steers	39 · 00 · 0
Item	Sheep ~~[illegible]~~	13 · 00 · 0
Item	Hay	20 · 00 · 0
Item	Three Swine a/3£ Each	09 · 00 · 0
Item	Debts owing to ye Estate	17 · 08 · 6
	Personal Estate, old Tenors	£ 252 · 14 · 3
Item	His Lands & Buildings	1100 · 00 · 0 old Ten.
	Total	£ 1352 · 14 · 3

The Apprasers Were Sworn Coram Nathl Holbrook Esqr Judge of Probate

Peres Bradford
William Turner
Job : Mason
} Apprizers

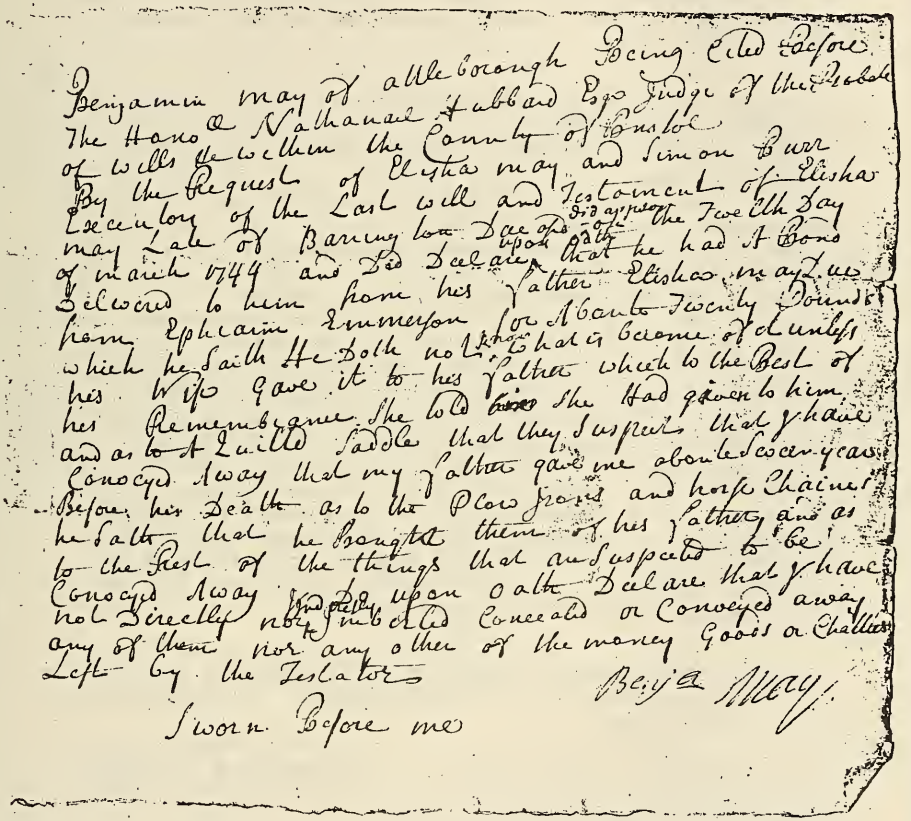
Sworn Decemr 10th 1744

INVENTORY OF THE ESTATE OF ELISHA MAY

Ephraim Emerson was, as pointed out earlier, a son of Elizabeth May by her first husband.

The widow Elizabeth May died in Attleboro, where her youngest son was living. Her will, dated February 12, 1750, names her "beloved son Ephraim Emerson," her "beloved son Benjamin May," and her grandchildren: Samuel Andrews, Elizabeth Humphrey, Ruth Hodges, and Elisha, Benjamin, Susannah and Elizabeth May.

Continued on Page 83



Benjamin May of Attleborough Being Cited Before
The Hono^ble Nathanael Hubbard Esq Judge of the Probate
of Wills Hewithin the County of Bristol
By the Request of Elisha May and Simon Burr
Executors of the Last will and Testament of Elisha
May Late of Barrington Dec^d Did appear on the Twelth Day
of March 1744 and Did Declare upon oath that he had A Bond
Delivered to him from his father Elisha May Due
from Ephraim Emerson for Abouts Twenty Pounds
which he Saith He Doth not know what is become of it unless
his Wife Gave it to his father which to the Best of
his Remembrance She told him She Had given to him
and as to A Quilted Saddle that they Suspect that y have
Conveyed Away that my father gave me abouts Seven years
Before his Death as to the Plow Irons and horse Chaines
he Saith that he Brought them of his father and as
to the Rest of the things that are Suspected to be
Conveyed Away I Do upon oath Declare that y have
not Directly nor Indirectly Imbelled Concealed or Conveyed away
any of them nor any other of the money Goods or Chattles
Left by the Testator

Benja May

Sworn Before me

BENJAMIN'S REPLY TO CHARGES

This is the sworn statement, signed by Benjamin May, answering charges that he concealed assets from the estate of his father.

In the Name of God, Amen. This twelfth Day of February Annoque Domini 1749/50. In the twenty-third year of his Majesties Reign, I Elisabeth May of Attleborough in the county of Bristol, being very sick, sick and weak in Body, but of perfect mind and memory thanks be given to God therefor, And calling to mind ye mortalty of my Body and that it is appointed unto all men once to Die, Do make & ordain this to be my last will & Testament, and principally and first of all I commit my Soul into the hands of God who gave it, and my Body to the Earth to be buried at the Discretion of my Executor hereafter named in Decent Christian Burial and as touching such worldly goods & Estate wherewith it has pleased God to bless me in this life I give & Dispose of the same in the following manner & form

Imprimis I give to my Beloved son Ephraim Emerson the sum of one pound in the old tenor

Item I give to my Grandson Samuel Andrews the sum of five shillings old tenor

Item I give to my Grand Daughter Elisabeth Humphrey my Brass Kettle and an Ironing Box and Heaters

Item I give to my Grand Daughter Ruth Hodges the sum of five shillings old tenor

Item I give to my Grandson Elisha May my Bible

Item I give to my Grandson Benjamin May one Case Bottle

Item I give to my Grand Daughter Elisabeth May my Bed with all its furniture, a Brass Skillett, looking Glass and a Table;

And further my will is that my puter and wearing Apparal & all my other Household Stuff (not before mentioned) be Equally Divided betwixt my Grand Daughters Susanna & Elisabeth May, excepting my best gown & Chest which I give to my beloved Son Benjamin May whom I constitute & appoint to be Sole Executor of this my Last will & testament, And Do hereby Revoke & Disanal all other Wills & testaments, Lagicies and Executors by me heretofore made, Ratifying & Confirming this and no other to be my last will & testament. In Witness whereof I have here unto set my hand and seal the Day and Year above written

Signed Sealed Published Pronounced and Declared by the sd Elisabeth May to be her Last will and Testament In the presence of us ye Subscribers

Ephraim Bowen
Sarah Follet
John Robbins, jun.

her
Elisabeth ϑ May /s/
mark

TRANSCRIPT OF THE WILL OF ELIZABETH MAY
Second Wife and Widow of Elisha May

The veneration bestowed upon Elisha May by his children is evident in their willingness to pass on his Christian name to their progeny.

Inadequate records make it seemingly impossible to chart the births, marriages and deaths of Elisha's grandchildren. Nevertheless, there is enough in Bristol County vital records and probate court and church records to give a reasonably good list of the grandchildren, albeit acknowledged that it is not a satisfactory list; there probably are some errors and even more likely that there are omissions.

Regardless, there are enough data to show that Elisha's five children gave his name and that of their mother to no less than seven of their issue. Only in the family of Elijah is there neither an Elisha nor Elizabeth, but in that family there is a blank of births between Mary, born in 1723, and Hezekiah, born in 1736. It seems quite probable there were children in that thirteen-year period, even if it is true, as conjectured, that all died.

Elisha May's eldest son, Elisha, Jr., was born, according to his age of 79 at death on November 27, 1773, in the year 1694. He was born, as explained earlier, before Elisha and his wife Elizabeth came from Roxbury in 1699 to settle on New Meadow Neck.

A Bristol County land deed shows that Elisha May, Jr., married Hannah Bowerman, daughter of Tristam Bowerman. The deed is dated January 16, 1724/25. This marriage, it appears, occurred about 1717. A comparison of birth and death records in Bristol County indicates Elisha and Hannah were the parents of:

ELISHA III	d. February 28, 1737, at age 19.
ELIZABETH	m. William West, int. August 13, 1740.
JOHN	m. Mrs. Sarah Gladding, Jr., int. August 13, 1746, m. by the Rev. John Burt.
ABIGAIL	d. May 20, 1746

The records on which the above is based are all in the town of Bristol. Hannah, wife of Elisha May, Jr., died in Bristol on November 14, 1756, her age stated to be 68. If correct, this would seem to prove Hannah was five or six years older than her husband. Elisha's death also was in Bristol, in 1773 as stated earlier.

(The family of Elijah and Jane May is the subject of a later chapter).

Sarah, Elisha's eldest daughter, married Joseph Allen of Rehoboth on October 6, 1720, in the Second Church. Sarah died before her father made his will, in which he spoke of "my five grand children which my daughter Sarah Allen left." He named "Sarah Allen, one of ye five grand children."

Joseph Allen married a second time and by this wife had six children. In his will, dated July 10, 1779, at Dartmouth in Bristol County, and entered in court in 1783, Joseph names children: Daniel, Joseph, Adam, Elijah, Abner, George, Elizabeth, Sarah, Rachel, Ruth and Lydia.

Having been named in the will of Elisha, Sarah is, of course, one of Sarah (May) Allen's five children. It is a difficult task, if possible at all, to determine which of Joseph's other ten children were issue of Sarah. From the names one might guess that Elizabeth, Ruth and Elijah were Sarah's children. And, as Joseph Allen left a major part of his estate to his son George and appointed him "sole executor," it may be that George was his eldest son and thereby, possibly, a child of Sarah.

Accepting this logic, Sarah (May) Allen's children were:

GEORGE ALLEN

ELIJAH ALLEN

ELIZABETH ALLEN (Called "unmarried" in Joseph's will)

SARAH ALLEN (Also "unmarried" as of 1779)

RUTH (ALLEN) CORNELL

Joseph Allen's will gives the married name of daughter Rachel as being Case, but she was deceased by 1779. Lydia's married name was given as Wood.

Elisha's daughter Ruth married Simon Burr of Rehoboth, on December 31, 1729. The Rev. Mr. Turner was the clergyman.

Simon Burr died in Bristol County in 1781. His will, dated May 4, 1781, names five children. Ruth (May) Burr died in Rehoboth, apparently intestate, and division of her estate was made in 1784, naming the five children named in Simon's will:

ELISHA BURR (called "eldest son")

NATHANIEL BURR

RUTH (BURR) WHITAKER

ELIZABETH (BURR) KINNICUTT

MARY BURR (unmarried)

Data on the progeny of Benjamin May, Elisha's youngest son, are much more complete. The details are given in the book "Descendants of John May of Roxbury, Mass. 1640," published in 1878 and again in revised edition in 1978. The information, said the writers, came "from Mrs. Hannah (Gay) May, wife of Tully May, who lived with her father-in-law, Elisha, until his death in 1811."

Benjamin May and Susannah Clarke were married on March 3, 1736. They were the parents of four children:

SUSANNAH	b.	Dec. 3, 1737
ELISHA		Mar. 25, 1739
ELIZABETH		Dec. 1, 1741
BENJAMIN		Feb. 23, 1743

Benjamin's wife died on March 11, 1743, sixteen days after the birth of Benjamin, Jr.

On July 7, 1744, six weeks before the death of his father, Benjamin May married his second wife, Martha Maxey.

Benjamin's eldest son, who married Ruth Metcalf on September 22, 1763, was Colonel Elisha May of Seekonk and Attleboro. He was considered to be well qualified for public office. During the Revolutionary War he was active in both civil and military duties. He was commanding officer of one of the regiments ordered out to suppress Shay's rebellion. For twenty-seven years he was a member of the governor's council or of the state legislature. For about forty years he was moderator of town meetings. As a magistrate he was efficient and was known for his wisdom in adjusting differences between contending parties. In politics he was a friend and disciple of George Washington.

Colonel May's wife, a native of Cumberland, Rhode Island, was a close relative of Judge Metcalf of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. She was the mother of eleven children.

Colonel May died on November 15, 1811.

Benjamin May, Jr., married Hopestill Dexter on April 18, 1767. They had twelve children. The family lived for a time at Providence, then moved to Royalston, Massachusetts. From there Benjamin took his family to Concord, Vermont. He was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. He died in West Concord in 1835 at age 92.

Susannah May became the wife of Isaac Brown on February 28, 1756. She was the mother of nine children.

Nothing is known concerning the marriage of Elizabeth May, the second of Benjamin's daughters.

Any chronicle of Elisha May's life seems incomplete without a brief history of the Second Church of Rehoboth, of which he was one of the original ten members and one of its first deacons. The church lived on . . . and exists today, although removed from its initial location.

The Rev. Mr. Turner, first minister, died on August 9, 1757, and was buried in the churchyard cemetery. His gravestone, which was recently replaced with a new one in order that the old one might be preserved inside the church building, bears the inscription:

In Memory of
the Reverend Mr.
David Turner,
Pastor of the Second
Church in Rehoboth,
who departed this
Life on ye 9th Day of
August, A. D. 1757, in
ye 63d Year of his Age.

"Watch and Pray because
You know not the hour."

In 1759 the church and its congregation, by an act of the General Court, was made into a separate society to be known as "The Second Precinct of Rehoboth," freeing the town of its responsibility for support. On February 29, 1759/60 (Old Style calendar), the precinct called the Rev. Robert Rogerson to be pastor. His annual salary was to be sixty pounds and he agreed to take one-third of it "in the produce of the country provided they bring me such articles as I have occasion for." The church was then called the Second Church of Christ in Rehoboth.

On March 8, 1773, just before the Revolution, the church members voted that the "old meeting house should be sold or pulled down provided that a new one can be built upon the plain near Timothy Readway's." (It is the site of the present Village Cemetery). The new building, forty by fifty feet in size, was built the following summer. It was "without bell or steeple." Pews were sold at auction in October, 1773.

This church was known as the "Yellow Meeting House" and the first assembly in it was on January 5, 1775. It had a large, high pulpit which was reached by spiral staircases on either side. Deacons' seats were in front. Four rows of deep, uncomfortable pews extended the length of the room. Men sat in the southwest corner; women in the southeast corner. For many years there was no heating of the building; the worshippers shivered through the service which ran an hour and

REHOBOTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

When the Second Church of Rehoboth was organized in 1721, Elisha May and Thomas Ormsby were elected its first deacons and served for many years. This is a drawing of the present church, situated in Rehoboth, a short distance from the site of the first house of worship, near the Palmer River.

a half in wintertime, two hours in summertime. Stoves were installed in the winter of 1819.

For various reasons -- one being a $10,000 legacy bequeathed to the precinct in 1776 by Ephraim Hunt -- the Congregationists petitioned the General Court to repeal the precinct act and incorporate them under the name "The Catholic Congregational Church and Society in the Second Precinct in Rehoboth." The act was approved in 1792, but the word "Catholic" later was stricken from the name.

The Rev. Mr. Rogerson, native of Portsmouth, England, was pastor until his death on March 20, 1799, a period of forty years.

Over strong opposition, the society voted in 1838 to build a new house of worship at a cost of $3,800. Some who opposed the plan called it "the church in the barnyard" because it was erected on land which had been a farmyard.

The "church in the barnyard" is the Rehoboth Congregational village church today, although its interior was thoroughly renovated in 1906.

Goff Memorial Hall, which serves as a parish house as well as a community center for the town, was given to the church by the Antiquarian Society in 1951. The Antiquarian Society was founded by one of the church's most noteworthy pastors, the Rev. George H. Tilton.

For more than two and a half centuries the Rehoboth Congregational Church has served as a bulwark of Christian faith. It has stood firm through four major wars. It is described in Rehoboth as an institution that "has helped make our town a good place in which to live."

Elisha May would be proud of it — and of the many dedicated Christian worshippers who have, in God's name, made it what it is.

MINISTERS WHO HAVE SERVED

David Turner	1721-1757	George H. Tilton	1877-1891
Robert Rogerson	1759-1799	Cyrus D. Harp	1892-1895
Otis Thompson	1800-1825	Charles B. Wathen	1896-1908
Thomas Vernon	1826-1837	Joseph W. Strout	1909-1915
Charles Grosvernor	1847-1856	Henry E. Oxnard	1916-1926
Walter P. Doe	1857-1859	W. Adelbert Redfield	1927-1934
Alexander C. Childs	1860-1862	Stanley M. Sargent	1934-1942
S. Y. Lum	1862-1864	Harold O. Worcester	1943-1947
Francis H. Boynton	1864-1867	George H. Douglas	1947-1956
Thomas Henry Johnson	1868-1869	Edith H. Wolfe	1956-1965
Henry D. Woodworth	1869-1872	Donald F. Jennings	1965-1974
Isaac R. Prior	1873-1877	Richard A. Weir	1975-

Elijah May

10

Elijah and Jane Buy Business in Warren

VITAL RECORDS and historical data of Bristol County contain only a little information on which a story of the life there of Elijah May can be reconstructed.

It is clear, however, that Elijah May was brought to Bristol County as a boy of about 5, or less, when Elisha and Ephraim took possession in 1699 of the extensive lands they had purchased from Dr. Hewes in Boston.

The will of Elisha speaks of "my two eldest sons, Elisha May and Elijah May." Elisha May, Jr., was 79 when he died on November 27, 1773, thus indicating he was born about 1694. Elijah, therefore, was born in the period 1695 to 1699. No record of either his birth or death has as yet been found.

That Elijah received a reasonably good education seems a certainty. The character of Elisha, who reaped the benefits of schooling under the apostle Eliot and schoolmaster John Prudden would have not allowed him to do less for his sons than was possible. So it is safe to say that Elijah, reared in Swansea (later known as Barrington), was well educated in things scholastic and spiritual.

The earliest appearance of Elijah's name in Vital Records of Barrington is his marriage. Elijah and Jane Whitaker were married on April 19, 1722.

Jane was 19 years old. Elijah, according to his estimated age when his parents settled in Swansea, was 23 or 24.

Various land records of Bristol County in which Elijah May was a grantor or grantee indicate that he and Jane lived in the county most, if not all, of their lives. However, they lived in at least three communities -- Barrington, Rehoboth and Warren.

Vital records of Barrington list four children born to

them:

MARY	b.	July 10, 1723
HEZEKIAH		Mar. 10, 1736
SAMUEL		Nov. 13, 1739
ELIJAH		Nov. 27, 1742

It seems strange there are no children between the births of Mary in 1723 and Hezekiah in 1736, a gap of thirteen years. There is nothing to indicate Elijah and Jane lived elsewhere during that period. What does seem possible is that they had additional children in that time and that an epidemic of some kind -- they occurred frequently -- took the lives of all but Mary. If such were the case -- and they recorded the births of their children later, which also was often done -- the children who perished were not registered at all.

In various deeds Elijah May's occupation appears as "husbandman," "yeoman," "labourer," and "cordwainer."

Elijah and Jane were grantors in a sale of land to Joseph Grant on March 19, 1746 -- nine days after Hezekiah's 10th birthday. This deed, in brief, says:

"To all people to whom these presents shall come, greeting. Know ye that I, Elijah May, of Barrington in the county of Bristol . . . in Massachusetts Bay . . . husbandman . . . for and in consideration of the sum of 300 pounds, bills of credit . . . truly paid by Joseph Grant of Swansey . . . convey . . . to him the sd Joseph Grant . . . certain pieces of land in Barrington on New Meadow neck one . . . tract with a house containing by estimation 25 acres . . . (boundaries defined) . . . also 2 acres and a half of salt meadow bounded . . . and Jane May the wife of said Elijah May doth . . . surrender all her Right of dower . . . unto Joseph Grant . . . In Witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals this 19th day of March 1746. . . One-third part of the salt meadow mentioned in this deed is set off to the Widdow May.

"In presence of us
Mary Thomas
Edward Luther

Elijah May /S/

her
Jane /O/ May /S/
mark

Jane, having made "her mark" on the deed, apparently could not write her name.

The "Widdow May" for whom a third part of the salt meadow was set aside would be, of course, Elijah's stepmother, the deed being drawn a year and a half after the death of his

father. It is interesting to note that Edward Luther, who witnessed Elijah's signature, also was a witness to the 1743 will signed by Elijah's father. The deed was acknowledged by Elijah and Jane on July 1, 1748, and was recorded on the July 4 following.

On April 7, 1748, two months before acknowledgement of the sale of household and land to Joseph Grant in Barrington, Elijah entered into an agreement to buy a brick shop in the town of Warren. The deed, recorded on June 13, 1748, said, in part:

"To all people . . . I, Joshua Becknell Jr. of Warren in the county of Bristol . . . yeoman, for and in consideration of the sum of 60 pounds . . . paid by Elijah May of Rehoboth in the county of Bristol . . . labourer . . . do convey . . . to Elijah May . . . a piece of land with a brick shop standing on the same Lying and Being in the town of Warren aforesaid . . . bounded . . . to have and to hold . . . In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal . . . 7 April 1748

in presence of us
Katherine Curtis
Peleg Heath

Joshua Becknel Junr /S/
Ruth Becknel /S/

Acknowledged 11 April 1748"

Elijah and Jane, it appears, continued to live in Warren for a considerable number of years. He was admitted freeman on January 13, 1761.

Eighteen years after Elijah bought the "brick shop" in Warren, he deeded it to Elijah May, Jr. The document, in brief, says:

"To all people . . . I, Elijah May, of Warren in the County of Bristol in the Colony of Rhode Island, labourer, for and in consideration of the sum of 50 Spanish mill dollars . . . paid by Elijah May Junr. of the town county and colony aforesd, cordwainer . . . convey to . . . said Elijah May . . . one certain piece or parcel of land scituate lying and being in Warren aforesaid bounded . . . (same description as the deed of 1748) . . . together with the buildings and fences thereon . . . In witness whereof I, Elijah May and Jane my wife have hereunto set our hands and seals this 5 March 1766

In presence of us
Solomon Townsend
Sol. Townsend Junr.

Elijah May /S/
her
Jane /O/ May /S/
mark

Recorded 24 March 1766
Acknowledged by Elijah May, 17 March 1766"

Only a year later, Elijah May, Jr., "cordwainer," of Warren, "for and in consideration of the sum of 50 pounds old tenor . . . paid to me by Samuel Allen, Junr. of Warren, aforsd, merchant . . . confirm to him Samuel Allen . . . a parcel of land . . . being in Warren aforesd, bounded . . . to have and to hold . . . In witness whereof together with my wife Mary I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 14 July 1767 in presence of us

Nicholas Ladne
Ruth Thurber

Elijah May (S)
Mary May (S)

Recorded 6 August 1767
Acknowledged by Elijah and
Mary May, 6 August 1767

Mary, the wife of Elijah May, Jr., was the former Mrs. Mary Wilson, of Bristol. They were married by the Rev. John Burt in Bristol on January 1, 1767.

In 1768 Elijah May, Jr., and Mary, sold the piece of land in Warren on which stood the "brick shop" deeded to him by his father in 1766. This grantor deed said, in essence:

"To all people . . . I, Elijah May of Warren, cordwainer, for and in consideration of the sum of 100 milled dollars . . . paid by Timothy Allen of sd Warren, yeoman . . . convey to him the sd Timothy Allen . . . one certain piece of land . . . being in Warren containing ½ acre of land . . . with the buildings thereon standing . . . bounded (same description as the deed of 1748). . . to have and to hold. . . In witness whereof I the sd Elijah May & Mary my wife have set our hands and seals this 11 August 1768
in presence of us
Sol. Townsend Jr.
her
Rebecca /X/ Brown
mark

Elijah May (S)
Mary May (S)

Recorded 18 Dec. 1769
Acknowledged by Elijah May, 25 Jan. 1769"

As stated earlier, no record of the death of Elijah May or of that of his wife Jane has been found in Bristol County. It is likely they died in Warren. Some of the vital records of that town were destroyed in a fire many years ago.

There is the possibility, however, that one or both died in townships away from Warren in which their sons Elijah, Jr. and Samuel settled their families.

In the state Census of 1782 Samuel May, believed to be the same Samuel who was a son of Elijah and Jane, was listed as being the head of a household of eleven persons in Glocester Township of Providence County, Rhode Island.

At the same time Elijah May, Jr. was listed as the head of a household in South Kingstown Township of Washington County, Rhode Island. There were eight persons in the home.

This gives rise to the question: Did Elijah and Jane -- one or both -- leave Warren to be near one of their sons? If so their names do not appear in the enumeration made in 1782. And there is no evidence to support the idea that they followed the eldest son, Hezekiah, to Woodstock.

Elijah May, Jr., as head of a household, continued to appear in the census of Washington County in 1800 and 1810.

Apart from the question as to the date of her death, much other information about Jane May is available in the records and history of Bristol County.

THE WHITAKER GENEALOGY

Jane Whitaker was born in Rehoboth on April 8, 1703. She was a daughter of Samuell and Mary (Squire) Whitaker, whose ten children, all born in Rehoboth, were:

SARAH	b.	Mar. 9, 1698
RICHARD		May 10, 1699
MARY		Mar. 3, 1700
JANE		Apr. 8, 1703
ELIZABETH		Apr. 8, 1705
RACHEL		Mar. 28, 1707
GRISELL		Apr. 2, 1710
SAMUEL		May 2, 1712
RACHEL (2)		July 20, 1714
RUTH		Oct. , 1717

The first Rachel died November 24, 1711, four months before she would have reached her fifth birthday. Samuel, the youngest boy, died on August 12, 1712, at age three months.

The names of Jane Whitaker's grandparents were well known in Rehoboth and appear in the history of Rehoboth, Boston and Roxbury.

Jane's father, Samuell Whitaker, was one of eight children, all born in Rehoboth, to Richard and Rebecca (Cooper) Whitaker, who were married on November 30, 1659, in Rehoboth:

NATHANIEL	b.	Aug. 16, 1661
JOHN		Sep. 18, 1663
MARY		Aug. 25, 1666

SAMUELL	May 15, 1669
REBECCA	Mar. 15, 1672
MEHETABLE	Nov. 27, 1674
EXPERIENCE	Jan. 27, 1678
NOAH	Jan. 31, 1682

Richard Whitaker, it appears, was the immigrant ancestor of the Whitaker line.

Richard's wife, Rebecca, was a daughter of Thomas and Rachel Cooper. She was baptized in Hingham, Massachusetts, on May 24, 1640.

Thomas Cooper was prominent.

He was born in Hingham, England, on January 29, 1604, a son of Thomas Cooper (or Cowper). He married Rachel in England and was known in Hingham as Thomas the grocer.

The parish register in Hingham shows five children born to Thomas the grocer and Rachel:

Thomas	b.	Aug. 31, 1630
Samuel		Mar. 2, 1632
Rachel		Nov. 1, 1633
Rachel (2)		Dec. 9, 1635
Elizabeth		Jan. 1, 1638

The register also shows that the first Rachel died on November 24, 1634, and that Samuel died on January 15, 1636. The second Rachel probably died also; she was not with her parents when they sailed to America.

Thomas and Rachel with two children, Thomas and Elizabeth, accompanied by two "servants," John Tufts and Robert Skouling, came over on the ship Diligence in 1638. The family settled in Hingham, where Thomas was a freeman in 1639.

Children born to Thomas and Rachel in New England were Rebecca, Jane's grandmother, and Nathaniel, who also was baptized in Hingham, on March 26, 1643.

In 1639 Thomas was granted permission "to sell wine and strong water, not suffering it to be drunk in his house." He lived in Hingham for five years and prospered.

In 1643 Thomas Cooper resettled in Rehoboth. He was No. 42 on the list of original proprietors and, being required to do so, disclosed his wealth, which he put at three hundred and sixty-seven pounds.

Thomas's name appears among those who drew lots for the division of woodland between the plain and the town, in 1644. Shares were drawn to the number of fifty-eight.

Thomas in 1645 was one of eight chosen to view the fences of Rehoboth and adjudge their sufficiency. On the same day, March 16, he was selected to be one of seven Townsmen for the following year. On April 28, 1647, he was chosen as one of two grand jurymen for the year and then again in 1649. He was chosen as Townsman again in 1651, '52 and '53. In 1652 he was selected as deputy to the General Court of Plymouth, an honor that was bestowed on him again in 1653 and 1658.

Thomas was one of twelve who laid out a highway from the Pawtucket River in 1684 "to John Blackstone's land, through the west plain & up ye hill to meet with ye way yt. leads to Mendon and along that road to Abbots run, Upon which sd run, on ye easterly side, the way is laid out near the river 8 rods in breadth leading unto Dedham road."

Thomas Cooper also was a deacon in the Newman Congregational Church. There is notice of him as deacon when, on November 20, 1657, Stephen Paine was chosen to assist Deacon Cooper to go to certain of the inhabitants and clear their accounts with the Rev. Mr. Newman.

No record was found of the death of Rachel, Thomas's first wife. He married a second time, Ann, the widow of Zaccheus Bosworth, of Boston, on October 17, 1656. She was buried at Rehoboth on February 1, 1680.

Deacon Thomas Cooper was buried on March 17, 1690, at Rehoboth.

Rebecca Cooper's elder brother, Thomas, also lived in Rehoboth, where he died in 1712. Her sister Elizabeth married Henry Smith of Rehoboth, reared seven children, and died there in 1690. Nathaniel, her younger brother, likewise lived in Rehoboth where he married. He died in 1676.

Rebecca, Jane's grandmother, died in Rehoboth in 1707.

THE SQUIRE AND RUGGLES GENEALOGIES

Jane (Whitaker) May's mother was Mary Squire, daughter of Philip and Rachel (Ruggles) Squire who were wed in Boston about 1664.

Philip Squire was a brewer and a nonresident proprietor of Rehoboth, he having served as a corporal in Captain William Turner's company at Medfield during King Philip's War.

He died in the spring of 1693. His second wife, the former Margaret Thomas, and his son, Philip, were administrators of his estate. It consisted of the homestead and brewery, and lands in Rehoboth and New Bristol (now Bristol, Rhode Island).

Mary Squire, still unwed, was one of the heirs named in the decree of distribution dated April 20, 1695.

The children of Philip and Rachel were:

RACHEL	b.	Jan. 5, 1665
GRIZELL		May 14, 1668
ELIZABETH		Feb. 2, 1669
PHILIP		Mar. 20, 1671
JANE		June 9, 1674
WILLIAM		Oct. 15, 1676
MARY		1677
JOHN		Aug. 16, 1678
EBENEZER		Nov. 3, 1681
SARAH		Mar. 27, 1684
PRUDENCE		Aug. 15, 1686
HANNAH		July 28, 1688
JANE (2)		Jan. 29, 1690

Philip Squire's first wife, Rachel, was born February 15, 1643. She was a daughter of George Ruggles, of Boston, and his wife Elizabeth.

George Ruggles was a weaver who was admitted to the church in Boston in 1633. He was a freeman March 4, 1634. Having acquired lands in Braintree, Massachusetts, he resettled his family there in 1640.

He died on June 18, 1669. Elizabeth, having received letters of administration July 27, petitioned the Suffolk County court the same day to consider her youngest son, "touching his father's desire concerning his having one side of his father's house, which was well known to be his mind."

Probate records show the children of George and Elizabeth to be:

ELIZABETH	bapt.	Dec. 8, 1633
MARY	"	Jan. 3, 1635
JOHN	"	Dec. 31, 1637
GEORGE	b.	May 5, 1640
RACHEL		Feb. 15, 1643
SARAH		Sep. 29, 1645
SAMUEL		Mar. 3, 1648
MEHITABLE		July 16, 1650

Rachel received from her father lands by deed dated April 11, 1668, and from her mother, Elizabeth, relict of George Ruggles, deceased, lands by deed dated August 30, 1669. In both deeds, recorded in Suffolk County, she was described as the wife of Philip Squire.

Rachel Squire died about 1682.

It is believed that George Ruggles was the same George Ruggles who was baptized on March 2, 1599, in Lavenham, County Suffolk, England, son of Roger Ruggles who married Margery Dandye on February 23, 1573. Roger was a son of Nicholas Ruggles. Nicholas was a son of Thomas Ruggles of Sudbury, in Suffolk, who bore arms and died leaving a will dated June 21, 1547.

The surname of this family is said to have been derived from two Anglo-Saxon words meaning "rugged lands." Its ancient English seat was Staffordshire where William de Ruggele lived when he gave faithful service to King Edward I. Early in the Sixteenth Century the name appeared in County Suffolk.

Thomas Ruggles of Sudbury, accordingly, was Jane May's great-great-great-great-grandfather.

LOCATION OF REHOBOTH
(Map on Next Page)

The town of Rehoboth is situated about forty miles southwest of Boston on a 1796 map of the southeast part of Massachusetts. A number of ancestors in the Bristol County branch of the May family were early settlers, or born, in Rehoboth.

Falls
Metham
Braintford
Rowley
Topsfield
Ipswich
Brentham
Rowley R.
Gidyeon Hill
The Salvages
CANNE
Thatchers I
The Loudoner
East Point
Baker's I
Marblehead
Marblehead Neck
Tinkers I
Gr Nahant
Lit Nahant
Pepperell
Groton
Dracut
Merrimack R.
Andover
Middleton
Lyrfield
Salem
Stoneham
Woburn
Medford
Malden
Lexington
Watertown
Cambridge
Charlestown
Boston
BOSTON HARBOUR
Brewsters
Gr Alderton
Konchasset R.
Konohasset H.
Strawberry Pt
Weymouth
Cohasset
CAPE COD BAY
Scituate H.
Scituate
Marshfield Pt
Brant Rock
Greens H.
Duxbury
Hallifax
Plymouth
Gurnet Pt
Long Beach
Monument Pt
Monument Land
Plymton
Middleboro
Taunton
Berkley
Raynham
Norton
Bridgewater
Abington
Braintree
Weymouth
Hingham
Milton
Dorchester
Roxbury
Needham
Natick
Sherborne
Framingham
Sudbury
Lincoln
Acton
Stow
Bolton
Carlisle
Billerica
Chelmsford
Westford
Bedford
Littleton
Nashua R.
Nanonog R.
Shirley
Tyngsboro
Tewksbury
Wilmington
Lyrfield
Haverhill
Amesbury
Newbury
Ipswich
Rowley
Topsfield
Wenham
Beverly
Salem
Marblehead
Lynn
Malden
Medford
Woburn
Reading
Lexington
Concord
Sudbury R.
Charles R.
Mystic R.
Neponset R.
Mother Br.
Blue Hill
Vapourset R.
Wapole
Stoughton
Wrentham
Foxboro
Easton
Mansfield
Taunton R.
Town R.
Nepahouset R.
Bridgewater
Meadow R.
Jones's River
Town
Hallifax
Duxbury
Green H.
Marshfield Pt
Brant Rock
Gurnet Pt
Plymouth
Long Beach
Monument Pt
Monument Land
Ravens R.
Jones R.
Bellingham
Burgee R.
Norton
Raynham
Taunton
Berkley
Plymton
Middleboro
Attleboro
REHOBOTH
Barrington
Swansey
Somerset
Fall R.
Falls
Stoney Ferry
Firetown
Dighton
Taunton R.
South's Creek
Assonet Neck
Weir R.
Wenham
Sandwich
Barnstable
Marshpee
Falmouth
Buzzards Bay
New Bedford
Acushnet R.
Fairhaven
Rochester
Bay
Rhode Island
Providence
Pawtucket
Seekonk R.
Patuxet R.
Pawtucket R.
Blackstone R.
Mendon
Uxbridge
Douglas
Sutton
Oxford
Dudley
Charlton
Southbridge
Woodstock
Thompson
Pomfret
Killingly
Canterbury
Plainfield
Sterling
Leicester
Spencer
Brookfield
Warren
Palmer
Monson
Brimfield
Holland
Sturbridge
Southbridge
Dudley
Oxford
Webster
Douglas
Uxbridge
Mendon
Blackstone R.
Providence
Pawtucket
Seekonk R.
Rhode Island
Patuxet R.
Pawtucket R.
Bay
Barnstable
Marshpee
Falmouth
Buzzards Bay
New Bedford
Acushnet R.
Fairhaven
Rochester
Wenham
Sandwich
Barnstable
Marshpee
Falmouth
Buzzards Bay
Nantucket
Martha's Vineyard
Elizabeth Islands
Gay Head
Cuttyhunk
Pasque I
Nashawena I
Penikese I
Naushon I
Uncatena I
Weepecket I
Monohansett I
Tarpaulin Cove
Holmes Hole
Edgartown
Sankaty Head
Great Point
Wauwinet
Coatue
Nantucket
Siasconset
Tuckernuck I
Muskeget I
Gr Point
Wauwinet
Coatue
Nantucket
Siasconset
Tuckernuck I
Muskeget I
Gay Head
Cuttyhunk
Pasque I
Nashawena I
Penikese I
Naushon I
Uncatena I
Weepecket I
Monohansett I
Tarpaulin Cove
Holmes Hole
Edgartown
Sankaty Head
Great Point
Wauwinet
Coatue
Nantucket
Siasconset
Tuckernuck I
Muskeget I

PART 2

THE HERITAGE
OF THE YANKEE
FROM VERT-MONT

Hezekiah May

of Woodstock, Connecticut,
and Strafford, Vermont

1736 -- 1819

Born in Barrington, He Went to Connecticut
Where He Wed a Young Lady of Notable Ancestry;
He Was a Militiaman Who Aided in the Rebellion
Until the Colonies Won Freedom From British Rule

Hezekiah May

11

Young Hezekiah May Goes to Connecticut

VITAL RECORDS of Barrington, Rhode Island, list the birth of Hezekiah May, son of Elijah and Jean May, on March 10, 1735/6.

"Jean" is an error, originating in the reading of or the writing of the name. Elijah's wife was Jane.

This date for Hezekiah May's birth is given in the "Old Style" or Julian calendar in which the new year commenced on March 25. The Gregorian calendar, now in use throughout most of the world, was introduced by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 and was adopted by England and the American colonies in 1752.

The British decreed that the day following September 2, 1752, should be called September 14, a loss of eleven days. References to all dates preceding were to be marked O. S. for Old Style. (George Washington was born on February 11, 1732, O. S. After 1752, accordingly, his birthday became February 22).

Hezekiah was born fifteen days before the year 1735 ended. Yet it was March. When adjustment is made for adoption of the new calendar his birth date of March 10, 1735, becomes March 21, 1736.

A further complication is the place of Hezekiah's birth. He was born in Barrington, but Barrington in 1735/6 was in Bristol County of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Barrington, which was a part of the town of Swansea prior to 1717, became a town (still Bristol County) in Rhode Island after the settlement of a boundary dispute in 1746-47.

Hezekiah's childhood years were spent in Barrington where he surely was close to his Grandfather (Elisha) May. He was 8 years old when his grandfather died and 10 years old when his parents moved from Barrington to Warren.

GENEALOGICAL CHART

1 HEZEKIAH[5] MAY
name
Born: 10 Mar. 1735/6
Where: Barrington, R.I.
Died: 1819
Where: Strafford, Vt.

spouse
ELIZABETH[8] CARPENTER

m. 19 Apr. 1722
Rehoboth, Mass.

2 ELIJAH[4] MAY
father
Born:
Where:
Died:
Where:

3 JANE[3] WHITAKER
mother
Born: 8 Apr. 1703
Where: Rehoboth, Mass.
Died:
Where:

4 ELISHA[3] MAY
grandfather
Born: 20 Mar. 1668/9
Where: Roxbury, Mass.
Died: 21 Aug. 1744
Where: Barrington, R.I.

5 ELIZABETH _____
grandmother
Born:
Where:
Died:
Where:

6 SAMUELL[2] WHITAKER
grandfather
Born: 15 May 1669
Where: Rehoboth, Mass.
Died: 1719
Where: Bristol Co., Mass.

m. 5 May 1697
Rehoboth

7 MARY[2] SQUIRE
grandmother
Born: About 1677
Where: Prob. Rehoboth
Died
Where

8 JOHN[2] MAY
g. grandfather
Born: 1631
Where: England
Died: 11 Sep. 1671
Where: Roxbury, Mass.

9 SARAH[2] BREWER
g. grandmother
Born: 13 Mar. 1638
Where: Roxbury, Mass.
Died
Where

10
g. grandfather
Born:
Where:
Died:
Where:

11
g. grandmother
Born:
Where:
Died:
Where:

12 RICHARD[1] WHITAKER
g. grandfather
Born:
Where:
Died: Dec. 1705
Where: Bristol Co., Mass.

13 REBECCA[2] COOPER
g. grandmother
Born: 24 May 1640 (bapt)
Where: Hingham, Mass.
Died: 1707
Where: Bristol Co., Mass.

14 PHILIP[1] SQUIRE
g. grandfather
Born: 1630
Where: England
Died: 29 Feb. 1693/4
Where: Boston, Mass.

15 RACHEL[2] RUGGLES
g. grandmother
Born: 15 Feb. 1643
Where: Boston, Mass.
Died: About 1682
Where: Boston

16 JOHN[1] MAY (1590-1670)
g. g. grandfather
17 ? (-1651)
g. g. grandmother

18 DANIEL[1] BREWER (-1646)
g.g. grandfather
19 JOANNA _____ (1601-1689)
g. g. grandmother

20
g. g. grandfather
21
g. g. grandmother

22
g. g. grandfather
23
g. g. grandmother

24
g. g. grandfather
25
g. g. grandmother

26 THOMAS[1] COOPER (1604-1691)
g. g. grandfather
27 RACHEL _____
g. g. grandmother

28
g. g. grandfather
29
g. g. grandmother

30 GEORGE[1] RUGGLES (1599-1669)
g. g. grandfather
31 ELIZABETH _____
g. g. grandmother

Hezekiah never knew his Grandfather (Samuell) Whitaker; he died seventeen years before Hezekiah's birth.

How long Hezekiah lived in Bristol County -- in Barrington or Warren -- is a question. It is known that he could read and write, so he apparently attended school in one of the towns if not both.

Hezekiah was 9 when his sister Mary, at age 21, became the second wife of James Bugbee, of Woodstock, Connecticut, in 1745. Hannah, the first wife of James, had died in 1743, leaving him with three small children. He was 28 at the time.

Mary apparently felt a fondness for Hezekiah. When her first child was born in 1746 she and James christened the boy Hezekiah Bugbee.

Mary's marriage was a milestone in Hezekiah May's life for it resulted in his leaving Bristol County to seek work and to settle on land he would acquire. He probably, at the outset, worked for and lived with James and Mary Bugbee.

There were other reasons, however, why Hezekiah was attracted to Woodstock. He had many relatives there -- numerous cousins who were the progeny of his Grandfather May's brother John. John's eldest son, John May III, had left Roxbury about 1720 to make his home in Woodstock. He had ten children. And soon after John III made the move, his brother Nehemiah also settled in Woodstock. Nehemiah was the father of seven children.

In addition to these ties, Grandfather (Elisha) May was one of the nonresident owners of lots in the three divisions of land in the North Half of Woodstock. Elisha owned considerable land at the time of his death, but the inventory of his estate did not list the size and/or location of the various tracts.

In the First Division (1695) Elisha obtained Lot No. 96, a fifteen-acre tract on the southwest side of Tommy Lyon Hill, less than a mile north of Central Cemetery. In the Second Division he obtained Lot No. 95, a tract of twenty-one acres, situated about a half-mile north of Cedar Swamp Pond, between Horse Hill to the east and Morse Hill to the west. In the Third Division he bought Lot No. 124, situated about a mile south of Hatchet Pond and on the western side of Easterbrook Hill.

Hezekiah may have obtained title to one of his grandfather's lots, but there seems to be nothing in Woodstock Land Records to prove it. Because Elisha died more than ten years before Hezekiah moved to Woodstock, it is quite likely Elisha's three lots had passed to others; indeed, it is not unlikely that Elisha sold one or all of them during his lifetime.

Land records do show that Hezekiah owned thirty-two acres in Lot 55, Ninth Range, Third Division, which he sold. The belief is, however, that this was speculation land at the time and that Hezekiah did not have his dwelling on it.

As there is no deed showing that Hezekiah purchased that lot, how would he have come into possession of it? The owner at the time of division was Samuel Payson of Roxbury. The widow of Samuel Payson's grandson, John Payson, who died in Roxbury in 1748, married Deacon Caleb May in 1750. Hezekiah may have obtained the Payson property from Caleb.

Woodstock was settled in 1686, largely by people from Roxbury who named it New Roxbury. Its Indian name was Wabbaquasset. There was doubt for years whether Woodstock was within the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts colony, or Connecticut.

By the time Hezekiah appeared on the scene, John May III and Nehemiah May were grandfathers. The number of May families living in Woodstock was plentiful and increasing.

Hezekiah's interest in Woodstock soon extended beyond the richness of its soil and appeal of its natural beauty. He was a young bachelor, in need of a wife. He found Elizabeth Carpenter to be attractive and charming. He courted her and proposed marriage. She accepted.

Elizabeth was one of six girls in a family headed by the widow Mary (Bacon) Carpenter. Elizabeth's father, Eliphalet Carpenter, Jr., had died in 1755.

On April 26, 1759, Hezekiah and Elizabeth were married by the Rev. Abel Stiles in the Woodstock Congregational Church. The bride was 18. The bridegroom was 23.

It was the eleventh time the Rev. Mr. Stiles had officiated in a marriage ceremony involving a member of the May families in Woodstock.

The marriage of Hezekiah and Elizabeth occurred three months following another wedding which was destined to be of historical significance. On January 6, 1759, a 26-year-old Virginian became the husband of Martha Dandridge Custis, "the prettiest and richest widow in Virginia." His name was George Washington.

12

A Wedding Recalls Ties to Mayflower

THE UNION OF Hezekiah May and Elizabeth Carpenter, from a genealogical viewpoint, possesses an interesting association with the life of a young leader on the historic voyage of the Mayflower in 1620. It is doubtful, of course, that anyone attending the 1759 wedding ceremony in Woodstock was giving much thought, if any, to those hardy forebears who made the epic journey to America.

The connection is not via descendancy from any of the Pilgrims. It is through a remote kinship of both Elizabeth and Hezekiah to the wives of William Bradford. He was married twice -- firstly to a May, secondly to a Carpenter.

Born on March 19, 1589, at Austerfield on the Yorkshire border, Bradford was a Scrooby Separatist at 18. He tried and failed to get to Holland in 1607. He succeeded in 1608.

As a young man Bradford had sought to court Alice, daughter of Alexander Carpenter, a Dissenter who took his family to Leyden on account of religious persecution in England under King James I.

According to tradition, Alice Carpenter's family opposed Bradford's advances because they viewed him as inferior in rank. Alexander was a descendant of William of Homme; also of Richard Carpenter, father of John Carpenter the Younger who was Town Clerk of London in the Fourteenth Century. Consequently, Alice Carpenter was induced in 1611 to wed Edward Southworth. She bore him two children.

So, having lost in his efforts to win Alice Carpenter's hand, young Bradford turned his attentions to Dorothy May, a daughter of John May, earlier of King's Lynn in County Norfolk.

Holland Records at Leyden contain an item: "15, Nov. 1613. William Bretfoort, fustian-worker, young man from Ooster-

feldt in England, affianced to Dorothea May from Witcsbuts in England. The banns were again published 23 Nov. and 30 Nov. but the marriage took place elsewhere."

Witcsbuts -- or Witzbuts -- is Dutch for Wisbech. Wisbech is a port and market town on the River Nene in the Isle of Ely in County Cambridge, near Lynn, County Norfolk.

The marriage of Dorothy May and William Bradford is registered in the Pulboeken at Amsterdam. The full entry says:

"1613 Nov. 9th, William Bradford of Austerfield, fustian worker, 23 years, living at Leyden, where the banns of marriage were laid, it was declared that he had no elders (i.e. parents) and Dorothy May, 16 years, of Wisbech. The attesting witness is Henry May. We may mention that four years earlier Dorothy May's sister Jacomye May, also of Wisbech in Cambridge, was married to Jean l'Ecluse, a book printer from Rouen, who was an elder of the Ancient Church of Amsterdam, having come over from the French Church of know evils existing among them."

To this is appended the signatures of the couple, Dorothy spelling her name Dority.

Tradition connects Dorothy May with County Sussex, whence came John May to Roxbury. An interesting possibility is that they were sister and brother. Dorothy, who was born in 1597, did have an elder brother John. John of Roxbury was born in 1590.

At first glance it is difficult to believe they were of the same family because Dorothy in 1613 was "from Wisbech," eighty miles north of London, while John May of Roxbury was in 1635 from Mayfield, forty miles southeast of London.

There is no convincing evidence, however, that John May of Roxbury was born in Sussex. He was 50 years old when he moved his family to America. This was close to twenty-seven years following Dorothy's marriage.

The question is: Was John May of Mayfield and Roxbury the John May of County Norfolk and later Cambridgeshire who was Dorothy's brother? Wisbech is an English port. John became a seaman. It does not seem unusual that his early life could have centered in Wisbech and London and that later he settled his family to live in Mayfield while he was at sea.

A genealogical report on Dorothy May in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register (Volume 50, page 462) lists her as the youngest child of John and Cordelia (Bowes) May of Shouldham Abbey and King's Lynn in County Norfolk.

This John May was a son of the John May (or Mey) who "was Doctor of Divinity and Master of Catherine's Hall, Cambridge,

and was consecrated Bishop of Carlisle by John Elmer, Bishop of London, deputed thereunto by the Archbishop of York, September __, Anno 1577. He died in the month of April, A. D. 1598."

Cordelia, wife of John May of King's Lynn, was a daughter of Martyn Bowes, second son of Sir Martyn Bowes, knight, goldsmith, Lord Mayor of London, son and heir of Thomas Bowes, "an inhabitant of Ye City of York."

Martyn Bowes married Frances Clopton, daughter of Richard Clopton, "of the knightly family of Clopton, of Melford and Groton in County Suffolk."

The NEHGR article says John May of King's Lynn, in the visitation of Norfolk, 1555-1613, Harleian Manuscript, 1552, folio 94, is recorded as having by his wife Cordelia the following children:

i. Margaret May, who married Richard Faucet.

ii. Frances May.

iii. Farnneru (Jacomye? who wed in Holland).

iv. Frances May.

v. Henry May, first son.

vi. John May, second son.

vii. Stephen May, third son.

viii. Dorothy May.

(The NEHGR article says John May of King's Lynn also had a daughter, Elizabeth, wife of John Sedgwick of Wisbech. They had three sons -- Edward, John and William Sedgwick -- all living in 1619, "some of whom may have settled in New England and connect with the noted General Sedgwick of colonial times.")

John and Cordelia May, Dorothy's parents, also were reported to be residents of Holland during the early part of the Seventeenth Century. And, since Henry May, Dorothy's brother, was a witness to her marriage, it may be assumed that he, too, lived in Holland. No mention is made, however, of the brother John.

An interesting description of May family psalmody in Holland was provided by another English resident, Ephraim Paget, minister of St. Edmond's, Lombard Street, London, in his "Heresiography, or a Description of the Hereticks and Sectarie," printed in London, 1645. In this, Paget says:

"Mistress May, who used to in her house sing (psalms) being more fit for a common brawl."

He added:

"By reason of such uncouth and strange translations and the meeter used in them the Congregation was made a laughing stock unto strangers."

One child, John, was born to William and Dorothy Bradford. The boy did not accompany his parents when they finally set sail on the Mayflower from Plymouth, England, on Wednesday, September 6, leaving behind the overmasted and much smaller vessel, the Speedwell.

John Bradford came to New England, but it has not been ascertained when. He was of Duxbury in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1645; afterwards, he was of Marshfield. He married Martha, daughter of Thomas Bourne of Marshfield, but had no children. He died in 1676.

Some of the Puritan Separatists from the Church of England had been living in Leyden since 1609 when they embarked on the journey to America. There were one hundred and one passengers, forty-eight in the crew. Their original destination was Virginia, but they reached Cape Cod in November, explored the coast, then landed at Plymouth -- so named for the Plymouth Company on a map made in 1614 by Capt. John Smith.

William Bradford's comment, "They knew they were pilgrims" (on a religious journey), later led to their being called the Pilgrims, as distinct from Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

From the Mayflower, Dorothy (May) Bradford saw America, but she never set foot upon its land. Entered upon the Mayflower's log for Thursday, December 7, was this entry:

"At anchor in Cape Cod harbor. This day Mistress Dorothy Bradford, wife of Master Bradford, who is away with the exploring party to the westward, fell overboard and was drowned."

Hers was the first violent death of the Mayflower expedition and it occurred on the twenty-seventh day after the weary passengers heard the crewman's cry, "Land ho!" That was on November 10, 1620.

The exploring party had left the Mayflower in a shallop on December 6, the day preceding Dorothy's death. Skirting the coast of the bay, it took three days to reach the site which became Plymouth harbor. When the party returned to the Mayflower on the 14th, it was met with the sad news that Dorothy Bradford was dead.

Belief is that her body was never recovered from its "watery grave" in the bay near the location of the present town of Provincetown at the tip of Cape Cod. While it may be assumed that prayer service was held in her name, none among

contemporaneous writers made mention of any burial service.

Although Bradford referred to her as his "dearest consort," his writings made only brief reference to her death. This may have given rise to a theory that Dorothy, exhausted by the journey across the stormy Atlantic and depressed by the desolate surroundings, had chosen to commit suicide. Apart from tradition, however, there is no warrant for the suicide theory. And there is no authority whatsoever for the suggestion that her marriage was an unhappy one.

In "History of Norwich," published in 1874, author Frances Manwaring Caulkins described Dorothy as "the earliest of our Mayflowers, the herald of those that give fragrance to the airs of spring, and the graceful prototype of the white-winged bark that bore her and the pioneers of freedom over the ocean."

William Bradford became governor of Plymouth Colony following the death of its first governor, John Carver. The first winter had claimed the lives of half of those who made the voyage. Carver, "a godly man and highly approved among them," complained of a severe headache soon after the Mayflower had sailed for home on April 5, 1621. He slipped into a coma and died within a few days. He was 54.

Now William Bradford, at age 31, was becoming a man of prominence.

Meanwhile, with a greater degree of quiet restored to England, Alexander Carpenter had returned to his homeland and settled in Somersetshire. Alice Southworth had been widowed by the death of Edward and she, too, was living in Somersetshire. Learning of this, Governor Bradford wrote his first love a letter which was carried to England by one of the numerous ships which were beginning to visit New England, attracted by promises of profitable trade. In it, he said:

"I am not that Bill Bradford I once was. I am now Governor of the Colony, a widower, and if you will come to America I am at your service."

Alice sailed on the ship Anne, arriving at Weymouth in June, 1623. Her two children by Edward Southworth -- Constant and Thomas -- came with her. Also making the voyage with Alice were her sister Juliana and husband George Morton, and sisters Priscilla Carpenter and Bridget (Carpenter) Lee.

Alice and Governor Bradford were married on August 14. It was the fourth marriage ceremony performed in Plymouth Colony.

By Governor Bradford, Alice had three children: William, Jr., Mercy and Joseph.

Thirty-one times in thirty-six elections William Bradford was chosen governor of Plymouth Colony. And his wife was

highly respected in the community.

After the death of George Morton in 1624, Alice's sister Juliana married Menassah Kempton in 1627. He, too, had come to Plymouth in 1623. Priscilla Carpenter became the wife of William Wright, one of the passengers on the ship Fortune in 1621. Bridget married Dr. Samuel Fuller who had made the journey on the Mayflower, leaving Leyden after the death of his wife Agnes, another of the six Carpenter sisters.

The eldest of the Carpenter daughters, Mary, stayed in Somersetshire to care for the needs of her mother, following the death of Alexander Carpenter. At the mother's death Mary was urged by William and Alice Bradford to join them in America. She arrived in 1647. She lived with the Bradfords. Mary died at Plymouth on March 16, 1667, at age 90, "a Godly old maid never married."

William Bradford died on May 9, 1657.

Back in England, in 1663, Alexander Carpenter's only son, William Carpenter of Cobham in County Surrey, a King's Messenger (nobleman's honorary office), was granted the greyhound Coat of Arms by King Charles II. William of Cobham died without heirs, so the crest passed to the male next of kin, in America.

Alice Bradford died at Plymouth in 1670.

If there was kinship between Dorothy (May) Bradford and John May of Roxbury, it remains to be proven.

Concerning Alice (Carpenter) Southworth Bradford, however, the lineage is certain. She was a granddaughter of William Carpenter (1520-1550) of London. And Elizabeth Carpenter of Woodstock, Hezekiah's bride, was a great-great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter of the same William Carpenter.

CARPENTER COAT OF ARMS

Arms: Argent, a greyhound passent, and chief sable.

Crest: Greyhound's head, erased per fesse sable and argent.

Motto: Celeritas, Virtus, Fidelitas. (Speed, Courage, Fidelity).

13

Elizabeth Carpenter of Notable Ancestry

APART FROM distant ties to Governor Bradford's wife, Elizabeth Carpenter was a descendant of numerous notable and highly respected New England colonists. And her English ancestry, like that of Alice Bradford, can be traced to John Carpenter, born circa 1303, a Member of Parliament in 1323.

Richard Carpenter, a son of John and born about 1335, was a London merchant.

Richard and his wife, Christina, had two sons named John. John the Elder is the ancestor of Elizabeth. His brother, John the Younger, was Town Clerk of London.

Elizabeth Carpenter's American ancestral line commences with William Carpenter, born in 1576, a son of William Carpenter of Wherwell, born in 1540. The latter William was a great-great-grandson of William of Homme (1440-1520).

Clearance records at Southampton show that the ship Bevis sailed in May, 1638, with sixty-one passengers, among whom were "one William Carpenter, of Wherwell, aged 62 years; William, his son, aged 33 years, son's wife, Abigail, aged 32 years, and four grandchildren of 10 years or less (names not mentioned in the clearance), and a servant, Thomas Bansholt, aged 14 years."

One of the grandchildren, also named William -- the fifth consecutive William Carpenter -- was Elizabeth's great-great-grandfather.

The elder William Carpenter did not remain in America. He returned to England on the same vessel in which he came.

The son William, born in England in 1605, was a farmer. He settled first at Weymouth where he was admitted a freeman on May 13, 1640. He bought land from the Indians on January 30, 1641.

Genealogical Chart for ELIZABETH CARPENTER
Spouse of Hezekiah May

No. 1 JOHN CARPENTER, Member Parliament 1323
Born about 1303

No. 2 RICHARD, London Merchant
Born about 1335

No. 3 JOHN the Elder
Brother to John, Town Clerk London

No. 4 JOHN

No. 5 WILLIAM (William of Homme)
Born about 1440; died in 1520

No. 6 JAMES

No. 7 JOHN

No. 8 WILLIAM, London

No. 9 JAMES

No. 10 JAMES

No. 11 THOMAS

No. 12 WARNCOMB

No. 13 LORD GEORGE

No. 14. LORD GEORGE II, Died in 1749. Line extinct 1853

Gen. 1 WILLIAM
Born 1540, Son of
No. 8 English Line

Gen. 2 WILLIAM
Born 1576, England
Came on Bevis, 1638

Gen. 3 WILLIAM
Born 1605, England
Also on Bevis, 1638

Gen. 4 WILLIAM
Born 1631, England
Also on Bevis

Gen. 5 JOHN
Born 1652, Rehoboth
(No. 11 in Bowen*)

Gen. 6 ELIPHALET
Born 1679, Rehoboth
(No. 28 in Bowen)

Gen. 7 ELIPHALET
Born 1709, Woodstock
(No. 50 in Bowen)

Gen. 8 ELIZABETH
Born 1740, Woodstock
(No. 92 in Bowen)

*Genealogies of Woodstock Families, by Clarence W. Bowen

This William -- identified as William[3] in the American line -- was chosen to be Weymouth representative to the General Court of Plymouth in 1641 and 1643. Governor Bradford, whose wife was William's cousin, showed a friendship for William and favored him with his support in all his measures to the court. It is believed that it was Bradford's influence, and that of Alice Bradford, that induced William to bring his family to New England. However, it was the influence of another cousin, William Carpenter of Providence, who convinced William, later, that he should resettle on the Seekonk Plain -- where the new community, named Rehoboth, was being developed after the Rev. William Blackstone became its first white settler in 1635.

The William Carpenter at Providence was the son of Richard Carpenter of Amesbury, a brother of William of Wherwell. He had come to America in 1636 and settled at Providence with Roger Williams. His kinship to Mrs. Bradford also was that of cousin.

In 1645 William[3] became a citizen of Rehoboth.

The first settlement of Rehoboth consisted of fifty-eight members from Weymouth who drew lots on the division of lands in June, 1644. William Carpenter's name was No. 10 in that division. The homes of this colony were built in a semicircle around Seekonk Common and open towards the Seekonk River. This semicircle was called "The Ring of the Town." It was located in the site which now is East Providence, Rhode Island.

William, the elder, died in Rehoboth on February 7, 1659. His will, dated December 10, 1658, and probated April 21, 1659, distributed a large estate, including many books. His widow, Abigail, was executrix. Bequests were made to his sons John, William, Joseph, Abiah and Samuel, and to daughters Hannah and Abigail.

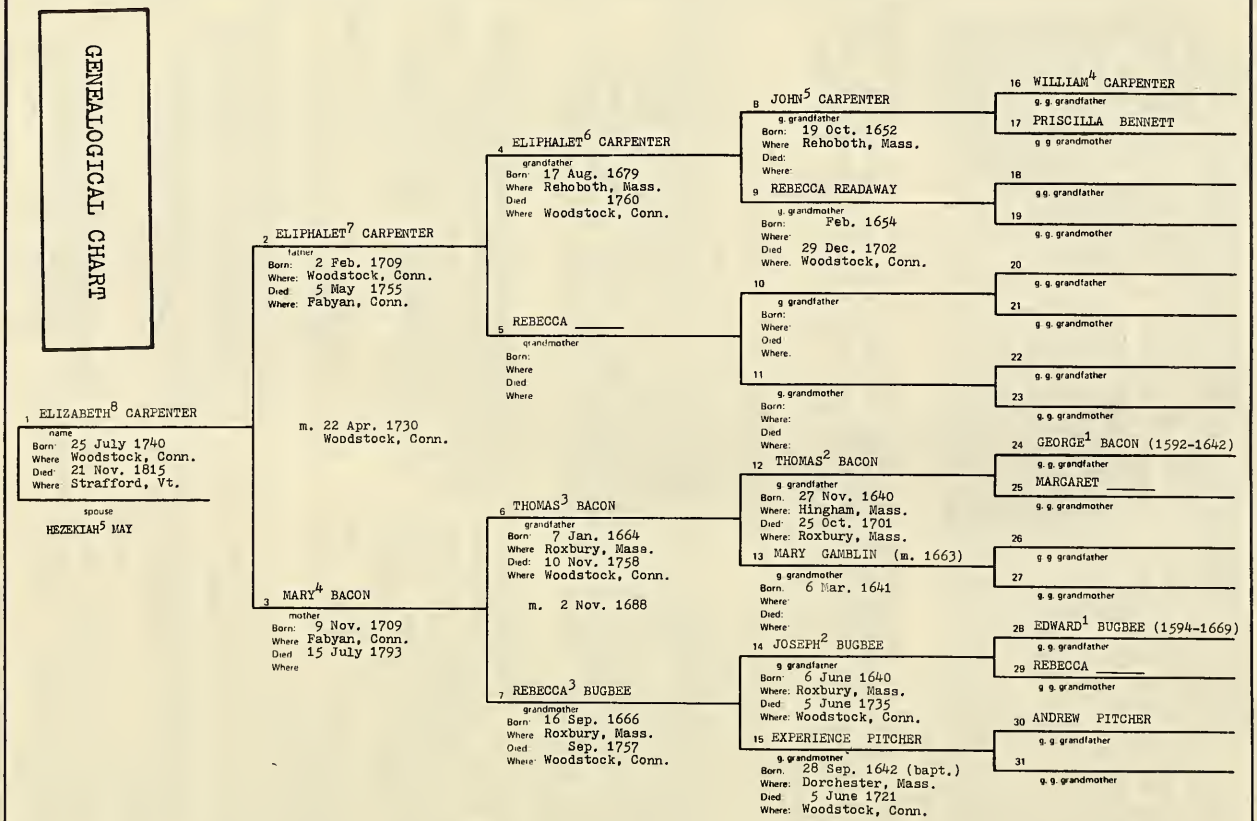
The widow Abigail died on February 22, 1687. Son William was executor of her estate, which went into probate on September 7.

William[4], who was 7 when he came to New England with his parents and grandfather, was, obviously, reared in Weymouth and Rehoboth, he being 13 when his father moved to Rehoboth.

On October 5, 1651, William[4] married Priscilla Bennett. He, too, was a farmer. But he also possessed skill as a surveyor.

William Carpenter was elected town clerk of Rehoboth on May 13, 1668, and he held the office -- with the exception of the year 1693 -- until his death. He was sent to the Gen-

GENEALOGICAL CHART



eral Court of Plymouth as a deputy in 1668. He was chosen to be a deacon of the church in the same year.

John, first child of William and Priscilla Carpenter was born in Rehoboth on October 19, 1652.

Priscilla died on October 20, 1663, the day in which their son Benjamin was born. Two months later, Carpenter married Miriam Searles.

Deacon Carpenter died in Rehoboth on January 26, 1703.

In Amos B. Carpenter's "A Genealogical History of the Rehoboth Branch of the Carpenter Family in America," (Amherst. 1898), Deacon William is described as being "a man of superior ability, accurate in all of his business transactions, and a reliable councellor in the colony; and he was noted also for his superior penmanship, as all his writings show."

Captain John Carpenter, the deacon's eldest son, also reared in Rehoboth, married Rebecca Readaway, daughter of James Readaway. To this couple were born eight children. The second son, Eliphalet, born in Rehoboth on August 17, 1679, was the grandfather of Elizabeth.

Captain John, who fought in King Philip's War, was a surveyor. He moved to Woodstock about 1690, where Rebecca died on December 29, 1702. He later married Sarah, widow of Ralph Day of Dedham.

Eliphalet Carpenter, who had extensive land holdings in Woodstock, married twice. His first wife, Rebecca, was the mother of nine children, including Eliphalet II, who was born in Woodstock on February 21, 1709. After her death he married Abigail Bacon of Barnstable in 1731. She gave him three more children.

Eliphalet died in Woodstock in 1760.

Eliphalet Carpenter II married Mary Bacon of Kekamoochaug (now Fabyan) on April 22, 1730. She was a daughter of Thomas and Rebecca (Bugbee) Bacon.

To them were born:

ELIPHALET III	b.	Feb. 1, 1731
MARY		Dec. 12, 1732
EPHRAIM		July 24, 1735
REBECCA		Jan. 25, 1738
ELIZABETH		July 25, 1740
ELIJAH		Nov. 27, 1742

EBENEZER	Apr. 22, 1745
DORCAS	Dec. 21, 1746
ABIGAIL	July 8, 1749
HANNAH	July 11, 1750

Eliphalet Carpenter II died at age 46 in Woodstock on May 5, 1755, eleven weeks before Elizabeth's 15th birthday. Mary, Elizabeth's mother, lived to age 83. She died July 15, 1793.

The names of Elizabeth's maternal grandparents -- Bacon and Bugbee -- both were prominent in the early history of New England. Mary Bacon, her mother, was the youngest of six children born to Thomas Bacon, Jr., by his wife Rebecca. The children were born in Woodstock, except Mary, who was born in Kekamoochaug on November 9, 1709.

THE BACON GENEALOGY

Thomas Bacon, Jr., was born in Roxbury, Massachusetts, on January 7, 1664. He was the eldest son of Thomas and Mary (Gamblin) Bacon, who were married on May 27, 1663. Mary was born in Roxbury on March 6, 1641, the daughter of Robert Gamblin, Jr., born in England. Robert Gamblin, Sr., brought his family to Roxbury in 1632. John May, who came to Roxbury in 1640, lived beside him.

The elder Thomas Bacon was born in Hingham, Massachusetts, on November 27, 1640. He was the fourth of six children born to George and Margaret Bacon. Thomas moved to Roxbury in 1665. He died there on October 25, 1701.

George Bacon, Elizabeth's great-great-grandfather, was born in Suffolk, England, in 1592. He came to New England with his wife and three children in 1635 and settled at Hingham. Thomas was their third son, firstborn in America.

George Bacon died in May, 1642. His widow then married Edward Gold of Hingham.

THE BUGBEE GENEALOGY

Rebecca Bugbee, Elizabeth's maternal grandmother, was born in Roxbury on September 16, 1666. She was the eldest daughter of nine children born to Joseph Bugbee by his wife, the former Experience Pitcher. Experience, daughter of Andrew Pitcher, of Dorchester, was baptized September 28, 1642.

Joseph Bugbee took his family to Woodstock in 1686 and settled there on the Westward Hill land. He was a Selectman and one of the "proprietors" of Woodstock. Experience Bugbee died in Woodstock on June 5, 1721. Joseph's grave-

stone says he died on June 5, 1735, "aged 92." However, the Woodstock Vital Records show that he died on July 26, 1729, at age 89. His date of birth was June 6, 1640.

Joseph was a son of Edward and Rebecca Bugbee whose home in England is said to have been at Stratford-le-Bow on the Thames, now a part of London. Two of their children, John and Sarah, were born there. Edward was born in England in 1594. Rebecca was born in 1600.

Edward's brother Richard came to New England in 1630 with John Winthrop, governor of the Massachusetts Bay colony. He brought his nephew John with him. Richard settled in Roxbury where he died five years after his arrival in America.

Edward and Rebecca, with daughter Sarah, came from Ipswich on the ship Francis in 1634 and also settled in Roxbury. Joseph was their first child born in America.

Edward died in Roxbury on January 27, 1669.

In his "History of Woodstock" Clarence Winthrop Bowen says:

> "The father of Richard and Edward Bugbee . . . was Timothy Bugbee. A tradition in the Bugbee family is that a remote ancestor in England of the Woodstock Bugbees married a Spanish lady of title who transmitted to her descendants the looks of her eyes and other features so that a Woodstock Bugbee has been called 'black as a Moor!'"

The James Bugbee who married Hezekiah's sister Mary was a grandson of Joseph and Experience Bugbee of Woodstock. Elizabeth Carpenter, Hezekiah's wife, was a great-granddaughter of Joseph and Experience via her maternal grandmother.

After her marriage Mary (May) Bugbee lived in Woodstock for the rest of her life. She gave birth to eleven children.

The son named Hezekiah became a prominent man in Woodstock. In 1773 he married Bathshua Holmes, daughter of Dr. David and Mehitabel (Mayo) Holmes.

Dr. Holmes and his second wife, Temperance Bishop, Jr., are ancestors of Oliver Wendell Holmes, justice of the U. S. Supreme Court.

Hezekiah Bugbee was a captain in the militia during the Revolutionary War.

He and Bathshua died in Woodstock and were buried in Woodstock Hill Cemetery in the same grave plot with his parents.

James Bugbee died on November 18, 1796, at age 81. Mary (May) Bugbee died on March 20, 1817, in her 94th year.

GRAVESITE OF HEZEKIAH'S SISTER

Dark gravestone (second from left) marks the burial place in Woodstock Hill Cemetery of Hezekiah May's sister Mary, widow of James Bugbee, whose stone is first one at left. Dark gray stones in the foreground mark graves of Captain Hezekiah Bugbee, his wife Bathshua (Holmes) Bugbee, and two of their children, Mehitable, 4, and Walter, nearly 3, both of whom died on August 30, 1778. It is believed that three children of Hezekiah and Elizabeth May who died in the Great Epidemic of 1766 also were buried in this cemetery, but there are no gravestones for them.

(Photo by Eva Jane Prior)

14

Three Children Die in Terrible Summer!

AS IT WAS with almost any young couple starting their wedded lives together in Eighteenth-Century America, Hezekiah and Elizabeth May expected a good living off the land, joy in the children they would rear, friendship with their neighbors, respect and mutual assistance among their kinfolk, and freedom to worship in the church of their own choosing.

Hezekiah had all the training required for him to farm the land where he built his home in North Woodstock. Additionally, he was a saddler by trade -- one who was skilled in working with leather. He would also prove, in time, that he knew how to deal in land . . . where there were profits to be made if the trader was shrewd enough!

The work was strenuous . . . for man and woman. Life was simple, but good if the colonist labored hard. It was not a time or a place for the lazy or faint-hearted.

When the autumn of 1759 came to Connecticut, Hezekiah was storing the food and fuel which were essential to the young couple's survival of their first winter together. And when the maples turned red and the days became short, 19-year-old Elizabeth had good news for her husband; she was "with child."

The winter came. Then spring . . . and work in the fields for Hezekiah.

On June 10, Elizabeth -- called "Betty" -- delivered her first child. It was a boy. And they gave him the name of Hezekiah's revered grandfather, Elisha.

Elisha was the first of twelve children Elizabeth would bear. In Colonial America a wife was expected to give birth to many children and she frequently did so at the expense of her own health, bringing on an early death.

When summer returned, in 1761, Elizabeth was expecting her

second child. It was a boy, born on November 15, given the name Asa.

Their third child was a daughter, born on May 4, 1763. She was named Betty. It was common practice in America's early years to give the mother's name to one of her daughters.

On December 10, 1763, for whatever reason, Hezekiah decided to sell the thirty-two acres he owned as the western part of Lot No. 55 in the Third Division and Ninth Range of North Woodstock. The buyer was Ezra May of Chesterfield, who paid his cousin sixteen pounds for the tract.

Ezra May obviously bought the land for speculation. He continued to live in Chesterfield. And he did not retain ownership long. On June 25, 1766, Ezra sold that land, along with thirty-eight acres in Lot No. 27 in the Fifth Range of the Third Division to Stephen May of Woodstock, his cousin. In like manner, Stephen also held the land for only a short time.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth gave birth to Hezekiah's fourth child. The boy was born on May 1, 1765, and was named Elijah in honor of his Grandfather May.

* * *

As the last remnants of the winter's snow disappeared from the fields, Hezekiah and Elizabeth prepared for the work they must do in the spring and summer of 1766. But it was to be a summer they would never forget!

In the heat of mid-July the children were stricken with illness . . . first one, then another. The symptoms of the sickness were frightening -- and all too familiar in a community which for more than a year had been in the grip of what was to become known as the Great Epidemic of 1764-68.

The illness was then known as "throat distemper." It was diphtheria, acute and contagious. The disease was not fully understood. The colonists knew no way to prevent its spread. They knew no cure. Once the "distemper" invaded a home there was great peril to all therein. The illness of one child would almost certainly mean illness for the others -- and not only the children, but often the adults too. Any contagious disease could sweep through a community like a firestorm.

In 1721 Woodstock had been hit by an epidemic of smallpox. In 1754 there had been many deaths from a wave of the deadly throat distemper. In 1764 the throat distemper had returned, striking with such such deadly force that many believed it was the vengeance of God!

One of the hardest hit of Woodstock families was that of Uriah and Lucy Johnson. On September 6, 1764, their daughter Olive died. On September 15 Esther and Frances died on the same day. On September 17 daughter Lucy died. Two days later their son, Parker, died. Uriah and Lucy had watched as five children died in thirteen days!

The nearby community of Pomfret also suffered. One of the first families hit hard in that village was that of Thomas and Sarah Cotton who owned a tavern at Cotton's Bridge on the Quinebaug River. One of their sons had died in the summer of 1763 at age 7. On July 16, 1765, their year-old son Chester died. On September 8 their daughter Anne, age 10, died. Two days later 11-year-old Luke Cotton died. Then Harvey, 7, died on September 17.

So there was much reason for Hezekiah and Elizabeth to fear the sickness which had befallen their children.

On Friday, the 18th of July in this summer of 1766 Betty May died. She was only two and a half months past her third birthday.

The grieving and frightened parents received words of consolation from their pastor as the little coffin containing Betty's body was buried. The crisis in the home, however, was too great to allow much time for mourning. The young couple had three more children exposed to the disease and, in addition, Elizabeth was carrying their fifth child, its birth expected in the following spring.

Six days following Betty's death the infant Elijah died. He was 14 months old.

Another small coffin was lowered into its grave. And there was more sickness in the home! Asa, too, had the distemper.

Asa's struggle was in vain. On August 2 the boy died. He was a little more than 4½ years old.

Hezekiah and Elizabeth took the third coffin to the cemetery, to be buried alongside the graves of Betty and Elijah.

Elizabeth, with whatever assistance Hezekiah was able to offer, had remained vigilant at the bedside of their stricken children, helpless to do anything more than the simple measures suggested for easing the burning fever of each victim as the sickness brought on the choking, gasping for breath -- and then death.

The Great Epidemic was a relentless stalker! In fifteen days three of the four children had died. Only Elisha, the eldest at age 6, survived.

There was almost nothing physicians could do to fight off the epidemics. The cause of many of the "fever" ailments was not known. Any illness which was contagious -- smallpox, measles, typhoid and diphtheria -- could rapidly become pandemic. The children were most vulnerable.

Before the Great Epidemic had run its course, scores of families in Woodstock and nearby communities buried one or more of their children. The townspeople endured the pain and sorrow, tears and grief. They could do little more than try to console the mourners and join in prayers asking God to lift the horrible burden which had fallen upon them.

Some, indeed, believed the epidemic was God's payment for their real or imagined sins. In the village of Pomfret the town clerk, Timothy Sabin, in December of 1764 penned in the first book of vital records:

> "Let it be Rembred that in ye Latter End of ye year 1764 it pleased God to send ye throat distemper into this Town and many Children died of it and may we be truly sensable to the hand of God on us and truly humble for our sins and Repent of and turn from them so that our God may show mercy to us for ye sake of Jesus Christ amen."

Another Pomfret family which suffered great tragedy was that of Ebenezer and Mary Holbrook. Their son, Appleton, 2, died on April 19, 1767. Daughter Peggy, 13, died on April 27. Luther, age 3, died on May 2. Artemas, also 3, died on May 7. William, 12, died on May 10. Sarah, age 16, died on July 2. Six children dead . . . in seventy-four days!

In Woodstock, in the awful year of 1766, Jonathan and Lois Wilson saw four of their children die in seventeen days! Abigail died on August 3 -- the day after Asa May died. Mary Wilson died on August 6. A son, Zolve, died the next day. Thomas died on August 20.

Daniel Paine, Jr., and his wife Elisabeth lost two daughters. Joseph and Ruth Manning lost two sons. William and Mary Gorden lost a son and daughter. Samuel and Anna Chamberlin lost a son and daughter.

The family of Hezekiah and Elizabeth was the first of the many May families in Woodstock to be struck by the epidemic, but not the last. Cousin Thomas May and his wife Lucy, who had buried a 2-year-old son in 1757 and a 4-year-old son in 1762, were aggrieved by the epidemic too. In 1767 their 2-year-old daughter Chloe died on September 27. Four-year-old Abel died on October 10. Lucy May gave birth to a daughter in the winter that followed and they named her Chloe after the child who had died. The second Chloe died on November 26, 1768. She was 11 months old.

The epidemic also struck the family of Deacon Caleb May, another of Hezekiah's cousins. Mehetable, 5-year-old daughter of Caleb and his wife Mehetable, died on June 23, 1768. Ten days later -- July 3 -- Abigail died. She was 3.

As it was for all of the grieving families, what a test of their faith in God was evoked for Hezekiah and Elizabeth by the calamity! What words could be uttered by any minister, even in Puritanical New England, to console the young couple? Would they, like others, believe God was punishing them for sin?

Does it not seem likely that Hezekiah and Elizabeth on a warm August night at their Connecticut farm would lift their eyes to a star-filled sky and ask: Why? Why, dear God, why?

Or was Hezekiah strong in the aftermath of the tragedy? Did he hold Elizabeth's hand and try to reassure her that this truly was God's will and that they must accept His wisdom, be brave, and carry on. They did still have Elisha -- and there was the baby soon to come.

Hezekiah's name had come out of the Old Testament. It was from the Hebrew words which meant "he whom the Lord had strengthened." He was male issue of a family -- and living in a time -- when it was common practice to christen with Biblical names. Considering his upbringing it seems unlikely that this man, given time, would fail to find strength and courage in his faith in God.

Nonetheless, the Woodstock saddler and his wife had to face reality. Despite the tragedy, life was to continue . . . and there was much work to be done. From July through September no farmer could take much time from his crops. In mid-July, when Betty and Elijah died, it was time for mowing hay. It had to be cut by hand with a scythe, raked to dry, and carted to the barn. August, when Asa died, was the month for harvesting. Barley, oats, rye and wheat had to be cut by hand, using a cradle -- a scythe with curved wooden braces to prevent the grain from falling off during the cutting. Haying was again an important duty in late August and September. By mid-September a farmer was expected to have the haying and reaping finished and it was then time to commence plowing again. Late in September the rye and winter wheat were planted. Then it was time for the harvesting of corn.

When harvesting was completed and the yield stored in the barn, the work of threshing and husking began and continued through the winter. Butchering was usually done in November or December.

The arrival of snow brought additional demands for the

farmer's time. Livestock had to be housed and tended in the barn. And when the snow was adequate, the major winter work began -- the cutting and hauling on sleds of firewood. As it was necessary for the wood to dry if it was to be good for either lumber or fuel, the expected needs for an entire season were gathered in the winter preceding. To cut the trees, haul the logs to the farmyard, then split the wood for use in heating or cooking was a hard, tedious chore. This labor could easily take the farmer well into January, or even February.

Autumn and winter did not mean a time of idleness for Elizabeth any more than for Hezekiah. Preparation of the daily meals, baking, preservation of vegetables and meats, the making of butter and cheese all were tasks usually performed by the housewife, with assistance from daughters, if any, who were old enough to help. To Elizabeth also, as other housewives of the time, fell the work of making the family's garments -- and this generally included the cleaning and carding of wool, spinning thread, weaving and all of the sewing. And if the cloth was to be dyed, she did that, too -- and usually made the dyes as well!

Children in the colonial period were expected to help with the work if they were able to do so. Elisha, at 6, was old enough to offer some assistance to his parents.

As the months passed in the winter of 1766-67 Elizabeth grew larger with the child she was carrying. When spring returned it was time. The baby was born on March 26. It was a girl.

In Colonial America it was not unusual to christen a new child with the name of one who had died. Hezekiah and Elizabeth named their second daughter after the first. She would be known as Betty.

They would turn to this custom again. Two years later, Elizabeth bore their sixth child -- a boy, born on May 14, 1769. They named him Asa.

15

Hezekiah Resettles in Hampshire Grants

IN THE DECADE of the 1760s accounts poured into Massachusetts and Connecticut about the good life which was to be found in New Hampshire. Fertile meadows and hillsides were available at low cost. Fish and wildlife were abundant. There were many streams and rivers. Thick forests offered a great supply of wood for both lumber and fuel.

As Hezekiah May listened to these stories, the intensity of his enthusiasm increased. Finally, he decided to emigrate from Woodstock in 1770. Many others had made the same decision, or were considering it. Among them were some of his kinfolk, in both the May and Carpenter families.

Visitors had for years been bringing back descriptions of the Connecticut River Valley in the Hampshire Grants. The Connecticut, originating in northern New Hampshire, flows southward, fed by swift-flowing streams of run-off water in both New Hampshire and the land which was to become the state of Vermont. Travelers wrote about its beauty and the purity of its water. It was later to be written about as "The Rhine of North America -- the greatest river of New England."

The population of the Connecticut Valley in 1760 is said to have been "several hundred men, women and children." Ten years later the total had swelled to about fifteen thousand.

The French and Indian War of 1754-60 had involved the militia and virtually stopped new settlement. But, following Canada's surrender in 1760, ending Indian raids, New Hampshire's Governor Benning Wentworth resumed grants. People from Massachusetts and Connecticut swarmed into the new settlements. They found land which grew bounteous crops of grains and hay. On the slopes, apple orchards thrived.

In 1767 a popular John Wentworth succeeded his uncle as governor. The population of New Hampshire had risen to more than fifty thousand.

Unfortunately, Hezekiah and Elizabeth left no diaries or writings to describe their journey from Woodstock northward. But history itself provides what may be considered to be a reasonably accurate account of how they traveled. Mostly, they walked!

In the era of the colonial settlements everyone did a lot of walking. Men, women and children all walked and were accustomed to walking long distances. A hardened man, using the half-run, half-walk pace of the Indians, could cover thirty to fifty miles a day over the roughest of trails.

One account describes Robert Macklin, a Portsmouth shopkeeper, as being New Hampshire's champion pedestrian. He is said to have regularly walked sixty-five miles to Boston in one day, do his shopping on the next day, and walk back to Portsmouth on the third day. And he was 80 when he made the last of such trips!

Being both a farmer and a saddler, Hezekiah must have taken with him many of the tools he had acquired, including the farm equipment he used in North Woodstock . . . an ax, scythe, simple plow, chains . . . and probably some carpentry tools. Elizabeth's most-needed household items also would have been taken. The total load, it seems, would have been small because they also had the children. Elisha, now 10, was enough "man" to be of assistance to his parents. But Betty was only 3. Asa was a year-old baby.

As Hezekiah always was somewhat of a horseman, he probably had at least one horse for the journey. He may have had more than one, but horses were expensive. Many colonists were content to get by with only one.

Two-wheeled carts, little more than boxes mounted on axles, were coming into use at the time. But there is question as to whether or not the trails Hezekiah followed into New Hampshire would accommodate a cart. If his horse pulled anything it may have been something similar to a travoix, a cargo carrier supported by long, flexible poles that dragged on the ground and met in front of the puller. This carrier was commonly used by Indians. Such a device -- assuming he did not use a cart -- would carry his tools and household items while providing a place for Elizabeth and Betty to ride. Elizabeth probably walked some of the many miles they traveled, but she also may have been on horseback part of the time.

Care of a horse could be a problem for a traveler. The animal had to be fed and rested. Shoe repairs might be required more than once if the horse was to be kept from going lame from the rough footing. Hezekiah surely possessed the

foresight and ability to cope with this as well as providing the food and rest the family would require.

Did Hezekiah and his family make the journey alone, or in company with others? It is not unlikely they traveled with other Connecticut emigrants, possibly kindred.

One who may have journeyed with them is Ephraim Carpenter, Elizabeth's second eldest brother. Ephraim married Tabitha Chaffee on May 14, 1761, following the death of his first wife, Rebecca. Ephraim did move to the Hampshire Grants and eventually settled in Strafford where Hezekiah and Elizabeth lived from 1773 until their deaths. Ephraim, who served in the Revolutionary War, died in 1809 at age 75. Tabitha died in 1824 at age 85.

Elizabeth's eldest brother, Eliphalet Carpenter III, had sold land in Woodstock in 1756. He and his wife, the former Freelove Harris, resettled in Keene, New Hampshire.

Elizabeth's sister Abigail also moved to New Hampshire, but much later than Elizabeth. After the death of her first husband, James Adams, Abigail married Lieutenant Asa Child in 1791. They went first to Keene, where Eliphalet's family was living, then later moved to Woodstock, Vermont.

* * *

The route of Hezekiah's journey northward from Woodstock would have placed him, sooner or later, in the valley of the Connecticut River. When he reached the river he would have been able to follow trails along its east banks, crossing the Massachusetts Bay Colony and then northward.

There were not many roads in New Hampshire in 1770. The first settlers followed trails, many of which had been blazed by Indians or fur trappers. The rivers provided the best means for travel, although they were sometimes dangerously swift and sometimes too shallow. Frontier settlers usually preferred to walk the trails that were to be found along the edge of rivers. The use of small boats, either upstream or downstream, was generally considered by most men to be too dangerous. On a major river such as the Connecticut, however, it was possible to arrange transportation if the traveler was able to pay the cost. Some early settlers looked to winter as the best time for travel; they could use sleds on the frozen ground or on the river's ice.

If Hezekiah sought to reach the river as soon as possible, he would have followed trails westward from Woodstock, arriving at the Connecticut after traveling a little more than thirty miles. Following the river across Massachusetts was a journey of about a hundred miles.

After reaching the New Hampshire border the remainder of

land to be covered was, of course, determined by Hezekiah's decision as to how far into the Grants he chose to go. Whether it was by pre-determination or the appeal of the site when he reached it, Hezekiah's destination turned out to be the town of Lyme, situated about eighty miles up the river from Massachusetts.

The settlement at Lyme was alongside a smaller river which empties into the Connecticut. The town rests in the foothills of a 3,240-foot peak in the White Mountains. Nearby was the settlement of Hanover where Dartmouth College had been founded a year earlier -- in 1769.

Although Hezekiah settled his family at Lyme and resumed his trades as a farmer and saddler, his eyes often turned towards the land on the western side of the Connecticut. He probably crossed the river many times to explore this new frontier.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth gave birth to another son. He was born at Lyme on March 30, 1773. They named him Harvey.

16

His "Promised Land" Is Found in Vermont

ABOUT FIVE MILES down the western shore of the Connecticut from the village of Lyme is the mouth of a river called the Ompompanoosuc, an Indian name which is said to mean "a stream where many onions are found."

A few miles inland the Ompompanoosuc divides into two branches, one leading to its source in the north and one to its source in the west. About ten miles up the West Branch is the town of Strafford.

The town (township) of Strafford, containing 24,325 acres in Orange County of what now is the state of Vermont, was chartered on August 12, 1761. It is beautiful countryside, richly endowed with forests and pasture land in the gently sloping eastern foothills of the Braintree and Northfield ranges of the Green Mountains.

Once he saw it, Strafford was the "Promised Land" for Hezekiah and Elizabeth May.

Soon after the birth of Harvey at Lyme, Hezekiah moved his family to Strafford, where Harvey's birth was recorded.

Hezekiah was described as being "of Strafford" and called a "sadler" when he paid "the sum of Twenty pounds Lawful money" to Charles Hinckley on August 21, 1773, for a hundred acres. The land was described in the deed as "situated and being in the township of Straford in the County and provence afforesaid it Being the first Deivsion of Hundred acres of Land Laid out to the origanael Right of Samuel Bill of No. 55."

Strafford in 1773 was in Gloucester County of the Province of New York. The legal draftsmen of the time had trouble with the spelling of Gloucester and frequently wrote it as the word sounded to them. Justice of the Peace James Pennock in this deed wrote it "Gloester" in the "province of New Yorke."

Southeast portion of Vermont, from a 1796 map. Strafford is in upper right corner.
Braintree
Randolph
Tunbridge
Strafford
Thetford
Lyme
Hanover
Dartmouth College
Falls 20 Feet
Norwich
Hartford
White R.
Sharon
Royalton
Bethel
Brandon
Philadelphia
Sudbury
Hubbarton
Pittsford
Chittenden
Mountain
Road over the Mountain
Stockbridge
Barnard
Pomfret
WINDSOR
Castleton
Rutland
Watergueechee R.
Woodstock
Hartland
Poultney
Clarendon
Shrewsbury
Middletown
Sutton
Reading
Windsor
RUTLAND COUNTY
Wells
Tinmouth
Ludlow
Cavendish
Weathersfield
Sugar R.
Pawlet
Danby
Harwick
Andover
Chester
Springfield
Rupert
Dorset
Brownley
Landgrove
Londonderry
Thomlinson
Rockingham
BENNINGTON COUNTY
Sandgate
Manchester
Winhall
WINDHAM COUNTY
Jamaica
Townshend
Athens
Westminster
Arlington
Sunderland
Stratton
Shaftsbury
Glastenbury
Somerset
Wardsboro
Newfane
Putney
Fulham
Woodford
Searsburg
Bennington
Wilmington
Marlboro
Brattleboro
Pownal
Stamford
Whitingham
Halifax
Guilford
Hinsdale
Scale of Miles
0 5 10 15 20
NEW HAMPSHIRE
CONNECTICUT RIVER
STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Although he appeared before Justice Pennock to acknowledge the sale, Charles Hinckley, it appears, was a nonresident land owner. He was described in the document of being a "merchant" and "of Lebanon in Windham County ye Colony of Connecticut." Windham is the county in which is Woodstock, whence came Hezekiah May three years earlier.

A full transcription of the deed (Strafford Land Records, page 33) reads as follows:

Know all men By these presents that I Charles Hinckley of Lebanon in Windham County ye Colony of Connecticut merchant for and in consideration of the sum of Twenty pounds Lawful money of said province to me in hand paid Before the Delivery hearof By Hezekiah May of Strafford in the County of Glouces-ter and province of New York sadler . . . . . the Receipt whereof I Do hereby acknowledge have Given Granted Bargained Sold and Relesed in and By thes presents Do give grant Bar-gain sell aliene Release Convey and Confirm to him the said Hezekiah May his heires and assignes one Hundred acre Lott of situated and being in the township of Straford in the County and provence afforesaid it Being the first Deivision of Hun-dred acres of Land Laid out to the Origanael Right of Samuel Bill of No. 55

. . . . . to have and to hold the said granted premises with the apportenances their of to him the said Hizekiah May and to his heires and assignes to his and their one proper use Benefit and and Behoof forever heire By ingaging to warrant and Defend the Said Granted primises against all Clames or Demands of any persons Claiming By from or under me my Heires & assignes & the and the orijinael Grantee . . . . . .

in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 21 Day of August in the 13th year of his majasty Reigne Anoque Domini 1773 . . . . . .

sined seled and Delivered
in the presents of us . . Charls Hinckly /s/

Rowland Powell juner
Daniel West juner . . . . . .

- -

Province of New Yorke)
Gloester County Strafford) the 21 Day of August 1773 - -

then the above named Charles Hinckley personaly appearing acknolidged the above writen instramant to Be his Free and Volentrey act and Deed Before me . . . .

James Pennock justice a peace

- -

Thus Hezekiah became a landowner in Strafford. In the following years he became a land trader, buying and selling tracts a number of times.

Only two weeks after he bought the hundred-acre lot from Charles Hinckley he purchased additional acreage from Israel Morey. This deed was dated September 3, 1773.

On February 21, 1774, he bought from Samuel Peters for five pounds half of a hundred-acre lot -- No. 63 in the Second Division, originally owned by Jotham Odiorne. Less than a month later, March 18, he bought fifty acres for ten pounds paid to Jeremiah Post, this tract also having been originally a right of Jotham Odiorne in the Second Division. Thirteen days later, March 31, he sold to Daniel West part of the land he had bought from Israel Morey. On October 7 of the same year he sold to Jonathan Rich the hundred-acre parcel he had bought from Charles Hinckley.

Hezekiah then purchased, on January 15, 1775, "one half of a Second Division Lot of Land, namely the northernly end of the sd hundred acre lot, the sd lot being drawn to the original wright of Solomon Phelps." For this land he paid the sum of twenty pounds to Gilliam Bliss. John Bliss and Hezekiah's son Elisha were witnesses.

Strafford Town Records (1761-1785) show Hezekiah's next purchase of land was on January 3, 1777, when he paid ten pounds to Enoch Bean for "the Hull of a Wright of Land Lying in the township of Strafford -- Excepting two Hundred acres of the first Devitions of the Said Wright . . . Sd Wright Belonging Oregenally to Steaven Barber." Eli Northrup and James Pennock, Jr., witnessed the deed.

An interesting facet of this purchase, taking place in the year 1777, is the language used by the draftsman at the end of the deed, which was written:

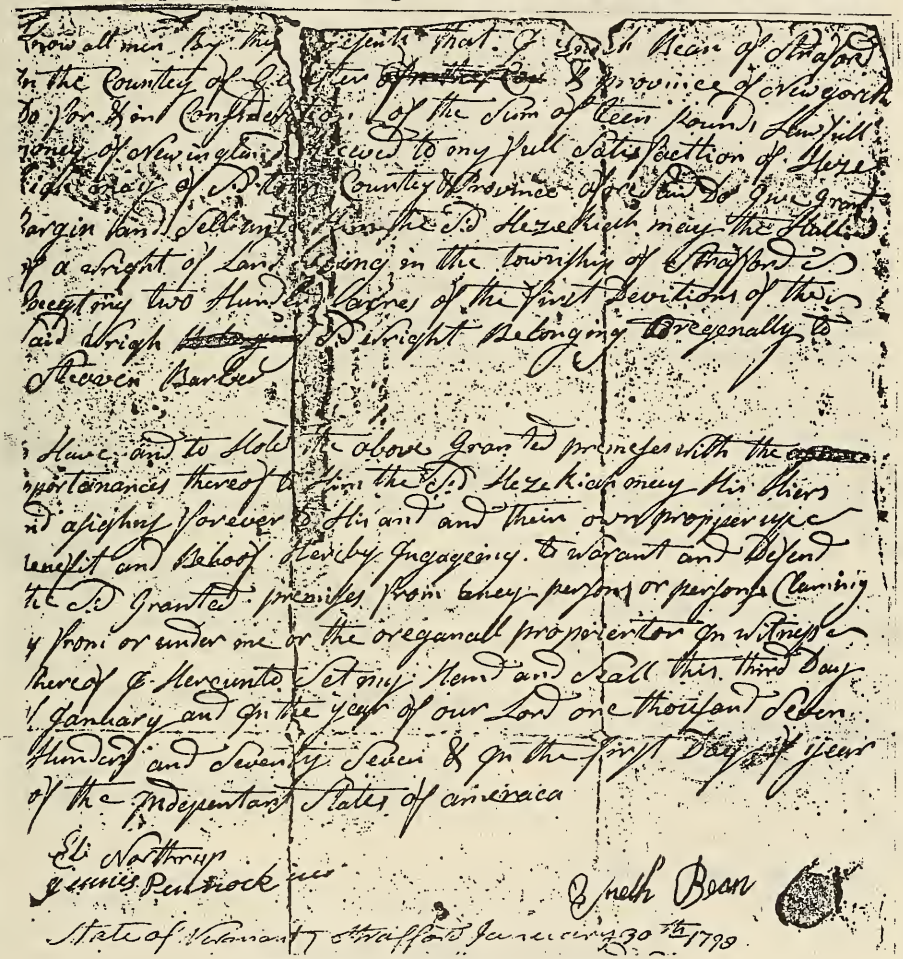
> "In Witness whereof I Hereunto Set my Hand and Seall this third Day of January and In the year of our Lord one thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Seven & In the first ~~Day of~~ (rubbed out) Year of the Indepentant States of Ameraca
>
> (signed) Enoch Bean"

This must have been a thrilling experience for all concerned in the legal documents of the time. Two years earlier when Hezekiah bought the tract from Gilliam Bliss, the deed was written in "this 18 Day January in the 15th year of his majestys Reign annoque Domini 1775."

"His majesty," of course, was King George III, who had ascended the throne of England in 1760. He was increasingly becoming a thorn in the lives of American colonists. His

dominating power was, as elsewhere in the "New" England, being felt -- and debated -- in Strafford.

There remains no certain evidence to show why Hezekiah May bought and sold land so frequently in Strafford unless it was the natural character of the land -- or that he was naturally a trader, perhaps profiting on some of his deals if not most.



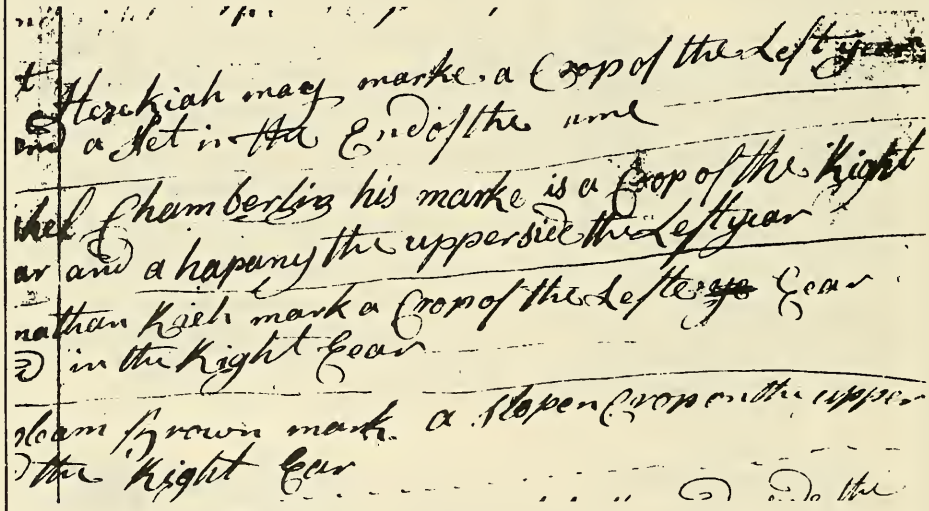
"INDEPENTANT STATES OF AMERACA"

Reproduction of Hezekiah May's deed to land in Strafford purchased from Enoch Bean "In the first . . . Year of the Indepentant States of Ameraca . . . "

As to the character of the land, about half of Vermont's farm acreage, excluding forests, is so stony that it still today is difficult or impossible to till and harvest, even with the use of agricultural machinery. Only fifteen per cent of the land is smooth and has fertile soil.

The early farmers found they could grow apples or berries, hay and potatoes. Nature provided a bountiful supply of sugar maple trees from which they took the sap and turned it into maple syrup or sugar. This, eventually, became a multimillion-dollar industry for Vermont, with about one of every four gallons of syrup in America coming from Vermont. The land also was suitable for cattle grazing and, for a time, milk production was the state's greatest source of agricultural revenue.

As did most of his Strafford neighbors, Hezekiah had cows. There is proof of that in one book of the Town Records. Written in the hand of Town Clerk David Chamberlin (who died in 1782) is a list of the marks cut into the ears of cattle by various owners in order to establish ownership in the event any cows strayed from their own fields.



HOW HEZEKIAH MARKED HIS COWS

This portion of a page from Town Records of Strafford includes description (at top) of Hezekiah's mark for identifying cattle: "a Crop of the Left year (ear) and a Slet (slit) in the end of same."

Not unmindful of the colonies' problems with King George, the people of Strafford also were certainly aware of the activities of Ethan Allen and his volunteer rangers. This group of settlers was organized as a consequence of a territorial dispute between New Hampshire and New York. Between 1749 and 1764 Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire had granted township charters in territory west of the Connecticut River. The same territory already had been claimed by New York. King George in 1764 ruled in New York's favor. New Hampshire citizens, determined to hold their land, resisted all attempts by New York to take it from them. A defense regiment was formed by settlers who called themselves the Green Mountain Boys. The regiment held New York at bay and later became an active patriotic group in the American Revolution.

Meanwhile, and commencing at a time when Hezekiah and Elizabeth were still living in Connecticut, the troubles between the American colonists and King George were intensifying. The English Parliament had approved the Stamp Act, one of several proposals, including the Sugar Act and the Currency Act, to tax Americans for the support of British troops and to benefit other British interests. Nine colonies, led by Massachusetts and New York, had convened a Stamp Act Congress in New York late in 1765 -- four years after Strafford's incorporation. It adopted a Declaration of Rights. The Congress protested Americans' lack of representation in Parliament and the use of admiralty courts without juries to try offenders. Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in 1766, but retained the principle of taxation.

British troops killed three and wounded eight on March 5, 1770, in what became known as the Boston Massacre. On that same day the Townshend Duty Act, which levied tax on paper, glass, painter's lead and tea, was repealed -- except for the tea tax.

In 1773 -- the year in which Hezekiah moved his family to Strafford -- tea ships of the East India Company were turned back at Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Then, on December 16, about sixty colonists, dressed as Indians, boarded three ships and dumped three hundred and forty-two crates of tea overboard in "The Boston Tea Party." Among the "Indians" was Paul Revere.

On September 5, 1774, the year in which Hezekiah was buying land from Samuel Peters and Jeremiah Post, the Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia. It had been called by the Colony of Virginia and was supported by the Committees of Correspondence of Samuel Adams.

Hezekiah May and his Strafford neighbors continued to till their fields or pursue their other occupations, but darkening clouds of revolution were building.

Two months after Hezekiah handed Gilliam Bliss twenty pounds for a hundred-acre Strafford lot, the great American statesman Patrick Henry was exclaiming at the Second Revolutionary Convention in Richmond, Virginia:

"Give me liberty or give me death!"

The date was March 23, 1775.

And on the next day Elizabeth May presented Hezekiah with their sixth son. The grateful father and his spouse named the boy Hezekiah May, Jr.

Before the baby was a month old, Paul Revere and William Dawes were warning Middlesex of the approach of British troops. The battles of Lexington and Concord were fought on April 19.

The news swept through the colonies.

The war was on!!

Colonel Allen and his Green Mountain Boys captured Fort Ticonderoga on May 10. Crown Point fell to the Rangers, who then joined in an unsuccessful American invasion of Canada via Lake Champlain.

A 43-year-old gentleman farmer who had married in the same year that Hezekiah and Elizabeth were wed left the pleasant life he was enjoying at his mansion in Virginia and went to Philadelphia to attend the Second Continental Congress. On June 15, in Independence Hall, gentleman George Washington was elected commander-in-chief of the Continental armies.

General Washington took command of the army on July 3 at Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was an undisciplined body of approximately sixteen thousand -- mostly farmers and boys who had assembled of their own free will to drive the hated British out of Boston. Could such an "army" overcome the trained regulars of England who were backed by the greatest navy in the world? The outlook was not good, even if the determination was grim.

Washington's army suffered one defeat after another and was almost constantly on the run. But the general was indomitable.

The British evacuated Boston on March 17, 1776. On May 15 the Continental Congress proposed a central authority. Richard Henry Lee on June 7 introduced a resolution "that these united colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent states." The resolution was adopted on July 2.

The Declaration of Independence on July 4 proclaimed the colonists were FREE!!

"We hold these truths to be self-evident," it said, "that

all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

The people of Strafford -- rebels and loyalists -- knew their geographical position was perilous.

King George's Proclamation of Rebellion threatened the American traitors. Ethan Allen and many others were sentenced to death if captured. Strafford -- Gloucester County -- had the important Connecticut River to the east and Lake Champlain, waterway to Canada, to the west. American forces took Montreal, but were repulsed at Quebec.

General Washington's first victory came on Christmas Eve, 1776. He surprised and captured a thousand Hessians at Trenton.

On January 3, 1777, Hezekiah was buying Enoch Bean's land in the "Indepentant States of Ameraca." On January 15, delegates to the Second Westminster Convention declared their own sovereign independence and adopted the name New Connecticut.

Now the dispute over statehood -- and, indeed, the war itself -- had come home to Strafford as in other settlements where British rule had angered colonists.

"Which side are you on?" That was the question of the moment. "Are you Whig? Are you Tory?"

Who could remain neutral?

General John (Gentleman Johnny) Burgoyne was leading a large force of British and Hessian soldiers -- said to number ten thousand -- southward from Canada. With the troops were several hundred Indians. The advance of this force along Lake Champlain created an uproar among the settlers.

There still was the question of the status of "New Connecticut." On June 4 the Convention of Windsor had been held and the new republic adopted the name Vermont . . . from the French description -- Vert Mont -- the Green Mountain.

While a Constitutional Convention was being held in Windsor in July, General Burgoyne recaptured Fort Ticonderoga. Hubbardton was under attack.

Every adult male was potentially a soldier in the colonies. With no trained army with which to defend themselves, the colonists had to depend on their own militia.

Vermont now faced an invasion by a powerful, well-equipped army which the American rebels viewed as "foreign." Loyalists in Strafford welcomed the redcoats. But the Yankees feared

the British would burn their crops, possibly their homes, and seize their livestock and food. They were frightened, too, by reports of Indian savagery.

The Strafford militia was alerted.

The company now was comprised only of those who described themselves as "patriots." John Alger was captain. Hezekiah May was lieutenant. Elias Chamberlin was ensign. David Chamberlin was sergeant.

Terrified by reports that General Burgoyne's battle plan was to cross Vermont to the Connecticut River and cut off northern New England, the people of Strafford on July 7 started an evacuation of their homes. The militia was ordered to assist the townsfolk.

Now the hour of decision -- loyalist or rebel -- was at hand. And Strafford was bitterly divided!

Divisions of loyalty had split many families, pitting brother against brother and friend against friend. Accounts of the emotional upheaval within some households were dramatic.

The split in the Pennock family was a stirring example.

In "Loyalty in Transition," a paper given before the Strafford Historical Society in 1975, Lee Pennock Harrington related a graphic account of the anguish her ancestral family endured in the Revolution.

James Pennock, at 54, had walked two hundred miles from Hebron, Connecticut, in the summer of 1768, to become the first settler in Strafford. His wife, Thankful, rode horseback. Their household goods were transported on an ox-drawn wagon. Six of their younger sons came with them.

Pennock cleared his land and built a log house.

Two married daughters and three married sons and their families later made the same move. And James Pennock's mother, 82 years old, also came. All who could work shared in the labor of building their new homes. There were nine sons, two daughters, and grandchildren.

Now the sons of James and Thankful were looked upon as members of the Strafford militia, the same as all other able-bodied men of the town.

Aaron Pennock was one of a party of fifteen sent out on a scouting expedition. It reported back that Burgoyne had retaken Fort Ticonderoga and that the American resistance was fleeing in disarray.

But the Pennock men were painfully divided as to the path they should take. Eight of the brothers, including Aaron,

went to Skenesborough, Burgoyne's headquarters, and enlisted in the Queen's Rangers. The ninth brother, 14-year-old Heman, volunteered to serve in the militia, as did Daniel West, husband of Heman's sister Anne. This was the Daniel West to whom Hezekiah May had sold farm land in 1774.

Shocked by their predicament, the aging James and Thankful remained in Strafford, trapped in the dilemma the Revolution had thrust upon them.

The Battle of Bennington set up the first confrontation of American loyalists and patriots. A contemporary account of the stand by a detachment Queen's Rangers at an outpost by the Wolloomsac River describes one of the dramas often encountered in the Revolutionary War. One of the American attackers was Jeremiah Post who had sold fifty acres of Strafford land to Hezekiah May in 1774. He lunged at John Peters, shouting, "Peters, you damn Tory, I've got you!" Peters dodged the bayonet and killed his former friend with a pistol shot.

Losses on both sides were high in the Battle of Bennington, but all of the Pennock brothers survived.

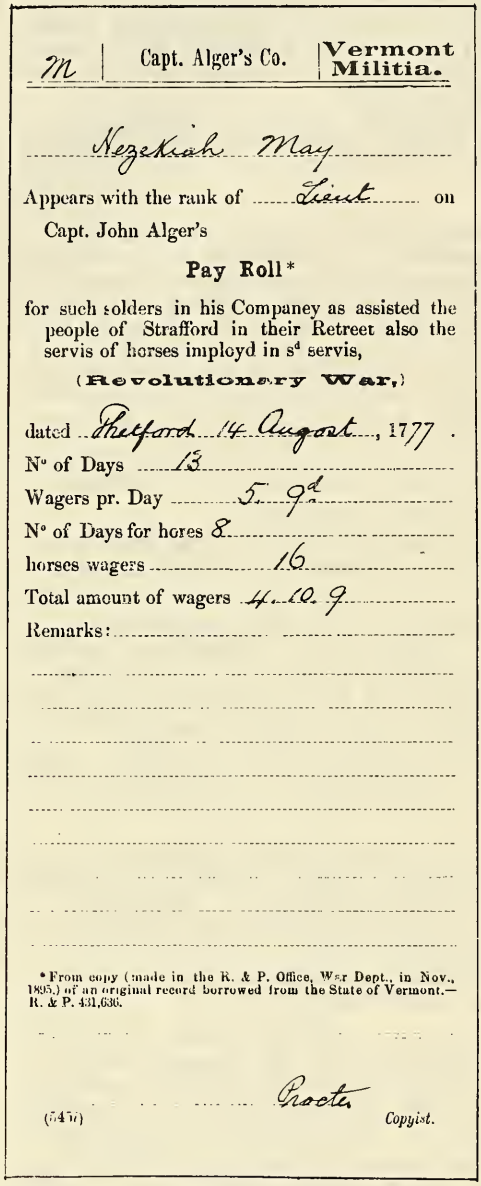
While this was taking place, the people of Strafford were fleeing their homes and farmsteads in terror. The exodus began on July 7.

Taking their cattle and whatever goods they could carry, the people were led by the militiamen to an encampment on the bank of the Connecticut River. Their plan was to cross the river and flee into the protection of New Hampshire towns if General Burgoyne's advance made further retreat necessary.

The population of Strafford was about seven hundred. Seventy men -- ten per cent of the town's total -- were now soldiers.

Approximately two hundred of the townsfolk spent most of the summer in the camp by the river. Among these, of course, were Elizabeth and the five younger children -- Betty, 10; Asa, 8; Harvey, 4; Hezekiah, 2; and a newborn son, Stephen. Elisha, now 17, was one of the militiamen. All lived in the open -- cooking, washing, sleeping on the bank of the river. The militia kept them provided with supplies.

The pay roll for Captain Alger's Company, dated Thetford, 14th August, 1777, "for such soldiers in his company as assisted the People of Strafford in their retreat," listed pay due to Elias Chamberlin, David Chamberlin, Levi Root, Samuel Huggins, David Rich, Solomon Root, Jared Alger, Joshua Tucker, Jonathan Rich, Samuel Rich, Frederick Smith, Elisha May, William Briscoe, Amasa Chamberlin, William Root, Silas Alger,



M | Capt. Alger's Co. | Vermont Militia.

Hezekiah May

Appears with the rank of Lieut on Capt. John Alger's

Pay Roll*

for such solders in his Companey as assisted the people of Strafford in their Retreet also the servis of horses imployd in s[d] servis,

(Revolutionary War.)

dated Thetford 14 August, 1777.

N° of Days 13

Wagers pr. Day 5. 9[d]

N° of Days for hores 8

horses wagers 16

Total amount of wagers 4. 10. 9

Remarks:

*From copy (made in the R. & P. Office, War Dept., in Nov., 1895,) of an original record borrowed from the State of Vermont.—R. & P. 431,636.

(7456) Proctor Copyist.

Asahel Chamberlin, Jonathan Root, Simeon Root, Jonathan Rich Jr., Jonathan Wood, Elisha Powell, Isaac Chamberlin, Constant Bliss and Daniel West and the two commanding officers. It was stated that this was "part" of the full company.

Payment also was listed for "the service of horses employed in said service."

Captain Alger received five pounds and ten shillings for eleven days at eight shillings per day and two shillings for horse wages.

Hezekiah received four pounds, ten shillings and nine pence for thirteen days at five shillings and nine pence per day, plus sixteen shillings in horse wages.

The total pay roll for the twenty-seven men and horse wages was fifty-nine pounds, eleven shillings and three pence.

Captain Alger signed a receipt at Thetford on August 15, having received the money from Major Israel Smith for payment "in full for all the service done by the company under my com-

AT LEFT: Reproduction of U. S. Government's record of Hezekiah May's service in Capt. Alger's Company, in the Revolutionary War.

mand in Strafford, both for scouting and assisting the people in their retreat and moving and taking care of tory effects."

Elisha May received one pound and seven pence for six days of service at four shillings and six pence per day -- the pay rate for all men in the militia below officer rank.

Money to support the American soldiers was raised through seizure and sale of loyalist property. Some farm lands -- including those of Pennocks -- were confiscated at Strafford.

The Pennock brothers who sided with the British soon found they were not well respected by the British regulars, who looked upon them as "provincials." Among the chores assigned to them was the labor of hacking a road through forested country to provide General Burgoyne with a path to Albany, where he sought to join the army of General William Howe, the British commander-in-chief.

Sketch shows how a New England Minuteman was dressed. A Strafford militiaman would have been similarly garbed.

After the American retreat at Hubbarton, combined Yankee forces defeated a large British-Hessian raiding party near Bennington on August 14. Meanwhile, to the south, General Howe's army defeated General Washington at Chads Ford on the Brandywine on September 11 and occupied Philadelphia on September 26.

General Burgoyne crossed the Hudson River in September and encamped near Saratoga, still adamant in his goal -- the capture of Albany. However, in the Battle of Freeman's Farm, General Horatio Gates with five thousand American troops attacked and wiped out a third of Burgoyne's army. With winter approaching, the outlook for Burgoyne was becoming desperate.

On October 7 a reinforced American army attacked and badly defeated the British at Saratoga. General Simon Fraser, the American-born commander of the Queen's Rangers, was killed. Three of the eight Pennock brothers -- Captain James Pennock, Jr., Jesse and William -- lost their lives.

Three of the five surviving Pennock brothers eventually returned to Strafford in accordance with arrangements

with Burgoyne before his surrender. They were Aaron, Peter and Oliver. Samuel and Jeremiah emigrated to Canada.

Although the war was far from ended, quieter days returned to Strafford following Burgoyne's surrender on October 17. The townsfolk returned to their homes and renewed their lives as they were before the threatened invasion.

In other families, as with the Pennocks, not all loyalists returned under the amnesty agreement, but many did. They were not warmly welcomed. Lands of some had been confiscated.

The Pennock brothers faced suspicion and some hostility, but they were allowed to stay and, in time, resumed active roles in the community. For them it was a much better reception than was accorded loyalists in other towns. Perhaps this was due, at least in part due to the people's high esteem for the elder James Pennock who continued to serve as a justice of the peace in Gloucester County throughout the war.

Concerning this, Lee Pennock Harrington commented in her 1975 paper:

"The town itself did not, of course, forget, but it does seem for the most part to have forgiven, and in a remarkable demonstration of reconciliation to have re-accepted the family on new terms not very different from the old."

Thankful Pennock died in 1798 at age 81. James Pennock died in 1808 at age 96. They were buried in the Old City Cemetery where a monument proclaims "this family was the first that broke the soil in this town."

* * *

Burgoyne's surrender meant to Hezekiah May and others like him in Strafford that they could return to farming or their particular skills with little worry about the British.

In the case of Hezekiah his service in the Revolutionary War, insofar as facing the rifles of British soldiers, had been bloodless. There is nothing on the record to indicate he ever was face-to-face with a Redcoat.

He did, however, remain in the militia which in 1780 was called upon again to deal with a war-related crisis. It was an Indian raid near Strafford in 1780.

While the war did not bring actual combat to Strafford, it did bring hard times. High prices and inflation affected all. Paper money -- bills of credit issued by the federal and state governments to pay war expenses -- depreciated badly after 1777. Under one scale, that which might be purchased for one dollar at the start of 1777 increased in cost until it reached one hundred and twenty dollars in mid-1781. Out of this came the expression "not worth a Continental."

17

Hezekiah Summoned When Indians Raided

ON JANUARY 7, 1778, Elizabeth May, at age 38, gave birth to twins -- a boy and a girl. They were christened Samuel and Polley.

This event made them a family of ten. Besides the twins, there were Elisha, Betty, Asa, Harvey, Hezekiah, Jr., and Stephen. More than eleven years had passed since that unforgettable summer when they had seen three of their children die.

And, while the Mays were working hard in an effort to improve the quality of their lives, the new United States of America was taking shape and the "Republic of Vermont" was headed for statehood.

The first elections, originally proposed for the fall of 1777 in Vermont, did not take place until the spring of 1778. In the meantime the Council of Safety, which fell under the dominance of the Green Mountain Boys, governed until elections could formally effect its provisions. The New York government continued to be busy with the war and not inclined to feud with Vermonters. As for the people of Vermont, they were happy with the outcome of the 1777 battles of Bennington and Saratoga and the decision to levy no taxes, but to support the state via confiscation of Tory property.

The state elections were held on March 3. The same Green Mountain Boys were returned to power. When the first Vermont Assembly met at Windsor (March 12-16), Thomas Chittenden became the first governor and the makeup of the rest of the Council showed little change from the old Council of Safety. The Allen faction, headed by Ira Allen (Ethan Allen had been captured at Montreal in 1775), had achieved the control it had sought since 1770. Ethan Allen returned from captivity on May 31.

In this same year, 1778, the men of Strafford held a town meeting at which they elected local leaders. Hezekiah May

was elected to two positions -- sealer of weights and measures and poundkeeper.

Joshua Tucker served as moderator when Strafford held its town meeting on March 18, 1779, a lively affair. Despite the routing of the British at Bennington, one of the decisive battles of the war, the outcome of the Revolution remained uncertain. It was a warmly discussed topic in Strafford that day.

In the minutes of the meeting, Town Clerk David Chamberlin wrote:

> "Voted that those tores and thier famaley that this town had Leve to send away should Not Return and inhabet in this town again."

Fortunately for some of Strafford's loyalists -- including the Pennock brothers -- this edict was not carried out with full force.

Hezekiah May, Frederick Smith and John Powell were elected listers at the 1779 meeting. A lister was an elected official charged with the responsibility of preparing a "Grand List" of townsfolk properties and assessing the values thereof.

John Alger, Chradrack Smith and Joshua Tuck were named selectmen. Jonathan Rich was elected treasurer. Elias Chamberlin was given the job of "cunstabel." Levi Root, Elias Chamberlin, Caleb Kimbel and Nathaniel Brown were elected surveyors of highways.

Entries in the book of Town Clerk Chamberlin, whose spelling was not what might be expected from a clerk today, also reported the election of "Nathanel Brown, Lether Seles, Joshua Tucker, Granjuramen." In addition to his position as clerk, David Chamberlin was elected "Brander." Isaac Chamberlin was named poundkeeper. Frederick Smith was elected "Seler of wates and meshers." Clerk Chamberlin and Silas Alger were named "Titherman." Samuel Huggens was elected "Seriff" and Elias Chamberlin was named "Colectter." All the terms of office were one year.

The Strafford militia again was called to service in the 1780 alarms of Barnard and Royalton, towns southwest of Strafford (see map, page 128). Both Hezekiah and Elisha responded.

John Hutchinson of Royalton became the first settler to suffer from the great Indian Raid on Royalton which began on the night of October 16. The 26-year-old Bunker Hill veteran had only time enough to hide his store of gunpowder in nearby woods before he was captured when returning to his burning cabin to aid his wife and their baby.

Three hundred Canadian Indians and a group of Tories led by the British army lieutenant, Richard Horton, had made their

way deep into Vermont to burn and harass, to create turmoil on the frontier. They had followed trails along the eastern shore of Lake Champlain, then along the Winooski River and the First Branch of the White River. They struck with the advantage of complete surprise. Plundered goods and prisoners, to be offered for sale back in Canada, was their reward.

Hutchinson's home was hit at the earliest traces of dawn. By midafternoon the raiding party had done its job. Horton reported his "scout" had burned twenty-eight houses and thirty-two barns "filled with grain." He said they had "killed all the black Cattle, sheep, Piggs &c of which there was a great quantity." Women and children were released, but twenty-seven men were taken prisoner. Two men were killed while trying to escape. None of the raiders was killed.

Despite the stealth of the Indians the alarm had spread as far as Hanover (New Hampshire) before noon.

Royalton and surrounding towns -- Randolph, Tunbridge, Sharon and Strafford -- were panic-stricken. Some families fled into the forests. Livestock, escaping from burning pens, jammed the narrow road between Royalton and Sharon.

The militia was turned out as quickly as possible.

By nightfall on the day of the "Indian War Whoop" about three hundred armed men were assembled at Randolph. A midnight confrontation was halted after the raiding party's oldest prisoner, Edward Kneeland, 66, was released to carry the message that any attack by the militia would result in an immediate massacre of all prisoners. The militia hesitated until dawn. The Indians fled northward, leaving two prisoners tomahawked in revenge for an Indian slain in an earlier skirmish.

A massive Indian raid on the northern frontier had been long expected. The settlers knew there was no adequate defense. Fortunately, the Royalton raid was the only major assault. Other Indian raids during the Revolution were minor events, causing much fright but few casualties.

John Powell was captain of the Strafford militia. Elijah Beman was his lieutenant. Forty-one others were listed on Captain Powell's pay roll when it was submitted on June 23. The militiamen served variously from two to fourteen days and received compensation of a little more than a shilling per day.

The Powell company also received sixteen shillings of pay for "4 horses 48 miles." It may be assumed that Hezekiah May again drew "horse pay" as his compensation for four days of service was four shillings greater than that paid to several others for four days service. Hezekiah was paid nine shil-

Pay Roll of Capt. John Powell's Company of Militia in the alarms of Barnard and Royalton, &c, &c. [1780]

Names	Days	Total
John Powell, Capt.	2	0.10. 8
Elijah Beman, Lt.	9	16. 0
Solomon Calkins, En.	14	17. 4
Abel Crandel, Sergt.	10	15.10
David Rich, "	11	17. 5
Nathan Norton, "	4	5. 4
Elisha Powell	2	2. 8
Daniel Gilman	6	8. 0
John West	3	4. 0
Oliver Pennock	7	9. 4
Heman Pennock	4	5. 4
Jonathan Rowell	2	2. 8
Jona Luce	10	13. 4
Eber White	10	13. 4
Isaac Comings [Corier]	3	4. 0
Elisha May	5	6. 8
Zerah Norton	10	13. 4
Jared Alger	6	8. 0
Solomon Root	7	9. 4
Wm Root	5	6. 8
Absalom Brown	10	13. 4
Heman Brown	4	5. 4
Jonathan Rich, Jr.	4	5. 4
Eliphalet Bean	3	4. 0
Thomas Bean	10	13. 4
Samuel Peters	3	4. 0
Hezekiah May	4	9. 4
David Chamberlin	5	6. 8
Josiah Brown	5	6. 8
Elias Chamberlin	3	4. 0
Zenas Morey	3	4. 0
Saml. Huggins	4	5. 4
Levi Root	2	2. 8
Peter Pennock	3	4. 0
Joshua Tucker	5	6. 8
Frederick Smith	5	6. 8
Silas Alger	2	2. 8
Jona. Wood, Jr.	4	5. 4
Joel Chamberlin	4	5. 4
Jonathan Wood	6	8. 0
Saml. Rich	6	8. 0
Jona. Rich	7	9. 4
Aaron Pennock	7	9. 4
		£18.18. 7
4 horses 48 miles 16.0		
Amount of rations £0.18.0	—	21. 8. 7

June 23, 1781. The within pay roll sworn to before me.
Timo. Brownson, Asst.

The within Pay Roll examined and approved and the Treasurer is directed to pay the same to Capt. John Powell or bearer, it being the sum of twenty-one pound eight shillings and seven pence.
Timo. Brownson, John Strong, } Committee.

lings, four pence. Elisha May served five days and was paid six shillings and eight pence.

Total pay for Powell's company, as reported in Vermont's "Rolls of the Soldiers in the Revolutionary War," (Rutland, 1904), was twenty-one pounds, eight shillings and seven pence. This included eighteen shillings for rations. Powell signed a receipt on June 26, acknowledging payment by Ira Allen, Vermont treasurer.

It is interesting to note that four Pennock brothers were in Captain Powell's Company. They were Heman, who had served in Captain Alger's Company in 1777, and three who had served under General Burgoyne in the Queen's Rangers -- Aaron, Peter and Oliver. The loyalist wounds of '77, it seems, were being forgotten.

After the Royalton raid, the quiet life returned to Strafford. The men were able to round up their livestock, tend their fields again or resume whatever work in which they were engaged by occupation.

Hezekiah May turned again to his land-trading ways. He had sold in 1779 half of the land he bought from Enoch Bean. In 1780 he sold the rest of it.

On September 2, 1783, he received sixty pounds from Aaron Truesdell of Thetford for fifty acres of Second Division land originally laid out to Phineas Porter. Ichabod Truesdell and Asa May, Hezekiah's son, were witnesses.

Then, on April 22, 1784, Hezekiah paid one hundred pounds to fellow townsman Frederick Smith for the hundred-acre Lots 29 and 30 in the Second Division, originally owned by John Gott and Phineas Porter. This deed was witnessed by Nathaniel and Mary Brown, whose granddaughter later would become Hezekiah's daughter-in-law.

This was the year in which the American Congress, on January 14, ratified the definitive treaty ending the war between England and America. General Charles Cornwallis had surrendered on October 19, 1781. The British Cabinet agreed to independence of the colonies in 1782. Preliminary peace articles between the United States of America and Great Britain were signed in Paris on November 30, 1782, and the definitive treaty was signed on September 3, 1783.

In the year of Cornwallis's surrender Elizabeth gave birth to Hezekiah's twelfth -- and last -- child. It was a daughter, born April 1, 1781. They named her Hannah.

Life in Strafford was going well for Hezekiah. He was active in town affairs and was elected a selectman when the annual meeting of 1781 was held.

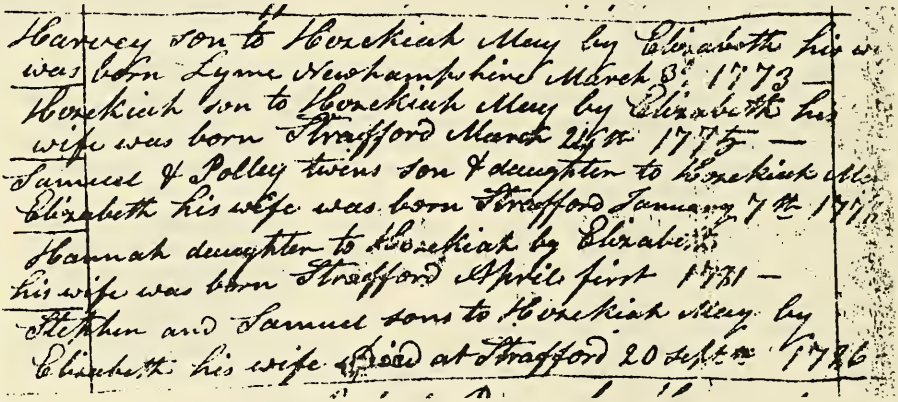
But tragedy was to strike again!

In the Town Records (below) it is told in a single sentence:

"Stephen and Samuel sons to Hezekiah May by Elisabeth his wife Died at Strafford 20 Sept.br 1786"

No explanation is to be found. It seems improbable that illness claimed both lives on the same day. It is more plausible to envision a situation in which the boys died accidentally. It was September 20 . . . perhaps a warm end-of-summer day . . . in which Stephen and Samuel wandered from home . . . possibly to the river called Pompanoosuc . . . and there they drowned.

Neither lad, as yet, was 10 years old.


Harvey son to Hezekiah May by Elizabeth his wife was born Lyme New hampshire March 8: 1773 —
Hezekiah son to Hezekiah May by Elizabeth his wife was born Strafford March 21st 1775 —
Samuel & Polley twins son & daughter to Hezekiah May Elizabeth his wife was born Strafford January 7th 1778
Hannah daughter to Hezekiah by Elizabeth his wife was born Strafford April first 1781 —
Stephen and Samuel sons to Hezekiah May by Elisabeth his wife died at Strafford 20 Sept.br 1786

ENTRY IN THE TOWN BOOK

This is the registration of the births of Harvey May (at Lyme), Hezekiah, Jr., twins Samuel and Polley, and Hannah "to Hezekiah May by Elizabeth his wife" as they appear in Book D (page 32) of Strafford Town Records. Entered below the births is the registration of the deaths of Stephen and Samuel May, both on September 20, 1786.

18

Hezekiah and Elisha Join Universalists

WHILE EACH TOWN had its "backsliders," the men, women and children in New England "kept the Sabbath."

Hezekiah and Elizabeth, and their children, worked hard on weekdays, but rested on the Lord's Day. For them, as it was with their ancestors, observance of the Sabbath was a deeply ingrained custom.

Actually, under laws passed by the Vermont Assembly in 1779, it was illegal to not keep the Sabbath! One act said: "No tradesman, artificer, labourer, or other person whatsoever, shall, upon land or water, do or exercise any labour, business, or work, of their ordinary callings, or any kind whatsoever, (works of necessity and mercy only, excepted) nor use any game, sport, play, or recreation, on the Lord's Day, or day of public fasting, and thanksgiving . . . " The penalty for violation was "A fine not exceeding 10 pounds for each offense."

Another act said: "That whatsoever person shall be guilty of any rude, profane, or unlawful behaviour on the Lord's Day, either in words or actions, by clamorous discourse, or by shouting, hollooing, screaming, running, riding, dancing, jumping, blowing of horns, or any such like rude or unlawful words or actions, in any house or place, so near to, or in, any public meeting house for divine worship, that those who meet there may be disturbed by such rude and profane behaviour . . . " And the penalty for violation was up to 40 shillings fine or "be whipped on the naked back, not exceeding ten stripes, nor less than five."

Thus, with town courts having the power to impose fines or punishment, it is certain that the good and churchly people were strict themselves about the Lord's Day. From sundown on Saturday through sundown on Sunday they could do no work except such necessary chores as milking the cows and

feeding the livestock. There could be no cooking, weaving, or woodcutting. Apart from attending meeting house services, travel was not allowed on Sunday unless it was in an emergency situation. The Sabbath was -- indeed! -- a dull and fidgety day for the young children.

In this environment and considering the religious training demanded by his Massachusetts ancestors, it was not unexpected that Hezekiah May would join in the movement to establish a Town Church in Strafford. So Hezekiah and eldest son Elisha were two of the townsfolk who signed the pact creating the Universalist Society.

The society was formed during the ministry of the Rev. Joab Young, who had preached in Strafford for two years before the Town Church came into being.

Joab Young was born in Rhode Island in 1758. He came to Strafford in 1796. As a consequence of his becoming the first settled minister in Strafford, he came into possession of a grant of land from the state, situated in the town and known as "the Minister's Lot."

He came to Strafford from Grantham, New Hampshire.

The movement to create the Universalist Society in Strafford began with a notice dated October 7, 1798. It said:

> Application having been made to me by more than seven substantial freeholders of the town of Strafford to warn a meeting, these are therefore agreeable to said request, notify and warn all the inhabitants of the town of Strafford that believe in the Universal Restoration of all mankind to happiness, to meet at the dwelling house of Daniel Robinson in said Strafford on the 21st. day of instant October. One o'clock afternoon. First to choose a moderator to govern said meeting. Second to form into a Society as the law directs. Third to choose a clerk for said Society, a committee, assessors, Treasurer and collector.
>
> Samuel Bliss, Town Clerk

The "more than seven" substantial citizens signing the request for a meeting were Jonathan Rich, Frederick Smith, Levi Root, Daniel Robinson, Solomon Root, Moses Sanborn, Seth Norton and Alexander Pennock.

At the meeting it was decided that a society would be organized for the purpose of public worship. In reporting this

meeting, the record reads:

> "Agreeable to the foregoing votes for forming a Society the following is the preamble: Whereas, the worship of God is not only a duty and a privilege inculcated throughout the Scriptures, but highly beneficial in a state of civil society, and Whereas, the General Assembly of the State of Vermont at their session in October 1797 passed an act authorizing any number of inhabitants including twenty-five being of a similar sentiment to associate and form into a society for the purpose of public worship, therefore, we the subscribers, believing in the restoration of all mankind to happiness, in compliance with our duty and in conformity with the laws, have, and hereby do, form into a Society known by the application of Universalists for the above purposes."

To this preamble are signed fifty-three names, those of Hezekiah May and Elisha May being among them.

Another meeting, called for November 22, adjourned without business.

At the third meeting, held on December 8, it was "voted to give the Rev. Joab Young a call to settle a minister over said Society." A committee was chosen "to confer with Mr. Young and make to his proposals for support and maintenance and receive his answer, and make report to this Society."

The committee delivered the following message to the minister:

To Mr. Joab Young, Sir:

We, Samuel Bliss, Jonathan Rich and Joseph Ball; a committee chosen by the Society of Universalists, collected and organized in the Town of Strafford; and being directed by said Society to give you a call to settle as minister of the Gospel, in and over said Society. Therefore, in behalf of said Society, do offer for your consideration the following sums, as a yearly support. The first two years, to be computed from the first day of Jan. next, one hundred dollars each year, to be paid in wheat at the common market price. Same to be delivered to your house in said Strafford. The third year to add twenty dollars to said salary; and also twenty dollars each and every year after until said salary shall amount to two hundred dollars. And then two hundred dollars each year, so long as you shall remain our minister; to be paid and delivered as above said. This we offer as a yearly support and want your answer.

Samuel Bliss,)
Jonathan Rich,)
Joseph Ball,) Committee

Mr. Young responded immediately. In writing, dated December 8, 1798, he said, in part:

> "I have considered your proposals as stated above and accept of them in the following manner: Viz. I will preach the Gospel and perform all the duties of a Gospel minister, according to the best of my abilities, as you by His grace shall assist me, during my natural life; unless dismissed as hereafter expressed."

Mr. Young made a stipulation: he reserved to himself "twelve Sundays in each of the two first years. The third year eleven; the fourth nine; the fifth eight; the sixth year seven; the seventh year six, and then six Sundays in each year, so long as I shall remain your minister."

He also proposed that the covenant between himself and the society should not be dissolved "unless it be by the voice of five disinterested persons of the same persuasion to be mutually chosen, or agreed upon by me and the Society."

To this, in turn, the society agreed. And it voted to add thirty cords of wood to Mr. Young's yearly support.

The Rev. Joab Young appears to have been a forceful speaker and was able to attract and sustain substantial attendance at the Universalist services. He continued to preach in Strafford until about 1812 or 1813. He died in Strafford on November 16, 1816, at age 58.

The affection felt for Mr. Young in the May family was made evident when Harvey and Joanna May named their third son, born in 1800, Joab Young May.

After obtaining Mr. Young as their minister, the people of the Universalist Society approved a plan to build a meeting house, which was done in 1799, the first year of his pastorate. He was installed at a service held in the structure even while it was yet unfinished.

The Strafford Town House, built with loving care by country carpenters, was erected on a small hill overlooking the village Common. An imposing structure, it still stands today as a beauteous crown on this Vermont village which -- to the stranger -- is discovered to be one of the hidden gems of New England. Although it was used by several denominations for a place of worship until 1830, by which time each denomination had built its own building, the Strafford Town House has been used since 1801 for the town's annual meeting. Other public events also are held in it.

The meeting house was built with twenty-six box pews in the balcony. There were about three times as many first-floor box pews, but these and the pulpit were removed in

THE STRAFFORD TOWN HOUSE
Built in 1799

1886, at which time three wood-burning stoves were installed because the meeting house was unheated.

The townspeople planned the building to house the entire Strafford population of 1,632 persons. The building was lighted naturally via its fifty windows (some of which still contain the original panes).

In the beginning, families paid for their pews at auction. The money was used to cover the cost of the building's construction. Elisha May bought a pew. It was No. 15 downstairs.

The interior of the meeting house was described by the Rev. John Moore, a later minister, in a letter to a friend:

"Well, I preach now, two Sabbaths in each month, in that same old-fashioned church, on that beautiful hillock, now adorned with maple trees. The pews, you know, are square; so that if any prefer to sit back to the speaker, they can do so. The pulpit, you recollect, is eight square, elevated quite as much above the people on the lower floor as any man could desire to be, if he had any thought of benefitting them, or of enjoying the blessings of social life. The entrance to the pulpit is so narrow as to remind one every time he enters it of the 'straight gate' of which we read; and to put the finishing touch to the whole, there is the beautiful sounding board, alias canopy, suspended from the ceiling by an ordinary iron rod, at the end of which is the representation of a hand, grasping a staple attached to the 'hand', and this holding it about ten inches above the head of the occupant of said pulpit, if he be a tall man. This ancient invention prevents the speaker's words from rising, I suppose, before the people can get a clue to their meaning."

According to tradition, it may be added, it was believed that if the minister told an untruth, the "hand" would immediately unclasp, thereby causing the sounding board to fall upon his head!

In 1974 the Town House Preservation Committee of the Strafford Historical Society commenced restoration of the building, which was falling into a state of disrepair after its hundred and seventy-five years of use. With a grant-in-aid from the National Park Service of the U. S. Department of the Interior, matched by an equal amount from the Eva Gebhard-Gourgaud Foundation, and money in the Society's Town House Fund, Strafford was able to see the Town House restored to its original appearance, or nearly so. The project was completed in 1977.

While it was the Universalist Society which brought in the Rev. Joab Young as Strafford's first settled minister, the Free Will Baptist Church had been active in Strafford

since 1793. When the meeting house was completed, the Free Will Baptists also used it for Sabbath services.

Hezekiah, as stated, supported the establishment of the Universalist Society, but it appears Elizabeth May and daughter Polley felt they had stronger ties to the Baptist church and were not inclined to break them to join the Universalists. Yielding to his spouse's devotion, Hezekiah May had a box in the balcony for attendance at the Free-Will worship services.

In a history of the Universalist Society written in 1897 by the Rev. John F. Willis, who was pastor at the time, he called attention to the fact that while Universalist movement was inaugurated by the town and was the expression of the religion of the people as a whole, there still were those who were opposed to the doctrine of the denomination, and who refused the use of their buildings as places of worship. But "the groves were God's first temples," he said, and it was in a grove belonging to Deacon Lilley that Joab Young was ordained.

The General Convention of the Universalist Society met in the Strafford meeting house in 1802. It was at this convention the Universalists first heard the reading of their Winchester Confession of Faith. The three Articles presented to the convention in Strafford were adopted the following year at Winchester, New Hampshire.

After Mr. Young returned from the ministry, there was no settled minister for the next ten or eleven years, but the society did not cease to exist. Visits were made by pastors from elsewhere, including the Revs. Hosea Ballou, William Farwell, Walter Ferris and C. G. Parson. Perhaps one of the reasons for there being no settled minister is that it was difficult in those years to raise a sum adequate to pay for preaching. About 1824 the Rev. J. E. Palmer served the parish and in that year the General Convention again was held in Strafford.

During the year 1826 it was considered advisable that the Universalist Society should reorganize. The record of the meeting says:

> "We the subscribers do hereby voluntarily associate and agree to form a society by the name of the Universalist Society in Strafford for the purpose of supporting a Minister, according to the first section of an act entitled 'An act for the support of the Gospel' passed October 26th 1797. In witness whereof we have hereunto severally set our hands. Dated at Strafford this 29th day of July AD 1826."

Leading the fifty-four who signed were Josiah Kendall, Joseph Morrill and Benjamin Lilley. The signature of Elisha

May is sixteenth on the list.

John Moore, born in Strafford and baptized by the Free Will Baptist minister, the Rev. Aaron Buzzell, became the Universalists' third pastor, following the Rev. J. E. Palmer. He was ordained in Barre in 1826. He left Strafford in 1828 to preach in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

Other settled ministers who followed Mr. Moore in Strafford included J. E. Smith (1834-37), William S. Ballou (1837-38), William Hastings (1838), Samuel C. Loveland (1839), Dennis Chapin (1840), S. Goodale (1841).

In 1833 the Universalist Society built a new meeting house in South Strafford, a place of worship also shared by the Free Will Baptist Church. In 1860 the Baptists sold their share of the building to the Universalists.

THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
Its second Meeting House was built
in South Strafford, in 1833

The United Church of Strafford, formed on December 2, 1967, traces its history to the Free Will Baptists and the establishment of the Congregational Church in 1820. The meeting house was constructed in 1832 as the Congregational Meeting House under leadership of the Rev. Harvey Freegrace Leavitt. It was built to the plan of "the new Baptist Meeting House in Lyme, New Hampshire."

However, Hezekiah and Elizabeth May were deceased when the Congregational Church -- that denomination of church in which they had spoken their marriage vows in 1759 -- came to the Vermont village where they had chosen to spend the rest of their lives.

UNITED CHURCH OF STRAFFORD

19

Vermont Is Admitted, 14th State of Union

VERMONT WAS ADMITTED to the Union on March 4, 1791. It was the first to join after the original thirteen states.

Surely the event was a foremost topic for neighborly conversation. And it probably was noted in the May household that admission came near to taking place on Hezekiah's 55th birthday anniversary.

Many had expected Vermont's statehood to come sooner. It had been fourteen years since Vermont declared its sovereign independence in 1777, six months after the thirteen colonies declared their independence on July 4, 1776. It had organized itself as a state in 1778 and adopted the name Vermont on the suggestion of Dr. Thomas Young of Philadelphia, based on the French Vert-Mont -- Green Mountain. The controversy over land grants was settled in 1790. Then Vermont ratified the U. S. Constitution in January, 1791.

Admission of the original thirteen states had commenced with Delaware on December 7, 1787. Pennsylvania and New Jersey were admitted later in that month. Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia and New York were admitted in 1788, North Carolina in 1789 and Rhode Island in 1790.

Vermont -- fourteenth state of the new United States of America -- was a fact. And Hezekiah May, born as a subject of King George III in the Massachusetts Bay Colony on March 9, 1735/6, and who bought some of his Strafford land in 1777 in "the Indepentant States of Ameraca," was now a citizen of the fledgling nation.

When Vermont became a state, President George Washington already had signed into law -- on March 1, 1790 -- the first Census Act of the United States of America. When the count

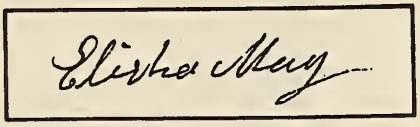
was completed, the nation's total population was established at 3,929,214. This included the three additional states of Kentucky, Tennessee and Maine although they had not yet been admitted into the Union in 1790. Vermont, enumerated in the months of April to September in 1791, had a count of 85,425.

The first census listed only seven men with the surname May as heads of households in Vermont. Hezekiah and two of his sons were among them. The May families in that first count, naming head of household, were:

	Free White Males of 16 and Upward	Free White Males Under Age of 16	Free White Females
ORANGE COUNTY			
Asa May, Fairllee	1	0	0
Hezekiah May, Strafford	2	0	3
Stephen May, Fairllee	1	3	2
Thomas May, Fairllee	2	1	3
WINDHAM COUNTY			
David May, Bratleboro	1	2	3
Samuel May, Bratleboro	1	0	0
WINDSOR COUNTY			
Elisha May, Sharon	1	1	2

The second male in Hezekiah's household in the initial census would seem to have been Hezekiah, Jr., who was then 16. Besides Elizabeth, the other females in the home were probably the youngest daughters -- Polley and Hannah.

Elisha, living in Sharon, which is only a few miles south of Strafford but in the county of Windsor, was Hezekiah's son. From all indications, the Asa May of "Fairllee" (West Fairlee, situated a few miles northeast of Strafford), was Hezekiah's second-eldest son, established on his own farm, but unmarried.



The Stephen May of Fairlee is believed to have been one of Hezekiah's many "cousins" in Woodstock, Connecticut. He moved his family to Fairlee in 1787. He was a son of Stephen and Mary (Child) May, born in Hebron, Connecticut, in 1755. He was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. His wife was Hannah Murray, born of Irish parents soon after their arrival in

America. Stephen and Hannah had eight children, including a son named Elisha.

Thomas May of Fairlee was a son of Thomas and Lucy (Child) May of Woodstock, Connecticut. He and Polly Mills were married in 1789 and settled in Vermont.

The relationship between Hezekiah and Samuel and David May of Brattleboro, if there was any, is unclear.

* * *

The decade of the '90s was a time when change was taking place in the lives of Hezekiah and Elizabeth. They had experienced revolution and victory; they had participated in the development and organization of Strafford as a town; they had watched Vermont change from a wilderness inhabited by a few hundred people into the new nation's fourteenth state -- boasting a population that was rapidly reaching the hundred thousand mark. New settlers were now pouring into Vermont and the two decades still ahead were to see the greatest increase in population the state ever had known -- from 85,425 in 1790 to 154,465 in 1800 and 217,895 in 1810. No other state in New England would show so large an increase by percentage during this period. The country was still largely agricultural and Vermont had an abundance of undeveloped land.

Elisha, eldest of the four surviving sons of Hezekiah and Elizabeth, married Mary ("Polly") Harris. She was a native of New Hampshire, born in 1762.

Elisha owned land in Strafford, but sold it to Alexander Pennock on September 8, 1787. At that date Elisha was described in the deed as being a resident of Sharon. The land, for which he was paid forty pounds, was "forty acres of Land Lying in the township of Strafford aforesaid it being the South part of Lot No. thirty Drawn to the Right of John Gott."

A son, Ziba, was born to Polly and Elisha in Sharon in 1799. Considering that Polly was then 37 and that they had been married several years, it is likely the couple had other children before Ziba. The census of 1800 lists Elisha and Polly as being residents of Sharon with three males and two females in the household, all under age 16. If these were children of Elisha and Polly, Ziba could not have been the eldest.

A daughter, Rosilla, was born to Elisha and Polly in 1810. She died in Strafford on August 21, 1817.

Other children born to Elisha and Polly were Hosea B., born in 1813; Ruby, in 1815; and David in 1817. Thus, the records show that Polly was 54 or 55 when David was born.

The date of Elisha May's death is not to be found in vital records of Strafford or Sharon, but the widow Polly died in Strafford on April 17, 1857, at age 94.

Ziba May married Eliza Pool in Strafford on December 4, 1828. He died in Sharon of tuberculosis on May 24, 1869. He was then a widower.

David May married Hannah Roberts on June 21, 1840. The census of 1850 shows the widow Polly and Hosea and Ruby May were living with David and his wife. Ruby died in 1854.

* * *

While Elisha May had chosen to remain in Strafford and Sharon to rear his family, such was not the case with Hezekiah's other sons.

Harvey May -- the subject of a later profile in this May chronicle -- married in Strafford and resettled in New York.

Asa May married Alzina Bishop.

On September 17, 1789, which appears to be the approximate date of his marriage, Asa paid twenty-five pounds to William Miller of Strafford for "fifty acres of Land of the Northerly end of sd Lot Lying and Being in the Township of Strafford aforesaid it being Lot No. 31 in the Second Division Drawn to the Right of Samuel Moffatt one of the original proprietors."

Asa apparently sold this land a short time later as he was living in West Fairlee when the census of 1800 was taken. There were two boys and two girls, all under age 16, in his household.

Hezekiah May, Jr., married Sarah (Sally) Hayes, born March 22, 1784, in Strafford. They settled in 1806 on the west part of Lot No. 7, Ninth Range, Stanstead County, Quebec.

Reports from the junior Hezekiah and his wife concerning their Quebec homestead convinced Asa that he, too, should move to Canada. He resettled at Ruiter's Corner, northwest of Stanstead, in 1805.

Asa and Alzina were the parents of six children, all of whom reached marriageable age. They were:

1. PHILINDA. Married John Sutton (his second wife).
2. SALLY. Married Dean Haseltine.
3. DANIEL. Married Louisa Mix.
4. JAMES. Married (1) Almira Boynton, (2) Alice ____ .
5. HARVEY. Married Mary Ann White.
6. CALVIN. Married Eliza McConnell.

Asa May died in Stanstead County on February 26, 1812, at age 42 years. His widow, Alzina, outlived him by thirty-one years. She died in Stanstead on June 12, 1843.

The younger Hezekiah and Sally reared a family of eleven children, all born in Stanstead:

1. ELECTA, born July 19, 1806. Married William Clark, Jr.
2. SYLVESTER, born April 8, 1808. Married (1) Almeda Marsh, (2) Eunice Bean, (3) Sarah Wadleigh.
3. HANNAH, born April 12, 1810. Married Allen Martin.
4. WILLARD, born November 14, 1813. Married (1) Mary A. Baldwin, (2) Nancy Mills.
5. LYMAN, born April 16, 1815. Married Electa Hathaway.
6. LORENZO, born September 9, 1817. Married Emmaline D. Mears.
7. RUBY, born May 19, 1820. Married Oscar Baldwin.
8. LOUISA, born February 21, 1823. Died July 21, 1838.
9. JAMES, born March 4, 1825. Married Amy Whitcomb.
10. MARY ANN, born June 19, 1827. Died November 3, 1850.
11. MARIA A., born May 30, 1830. Married Dean H. Sutton.

Hezekiah May, Jr., died at Ruiter's Corner, in Stanstead, on August 21, 1851. His widow, Sarah, died there in 1871, at age 87.

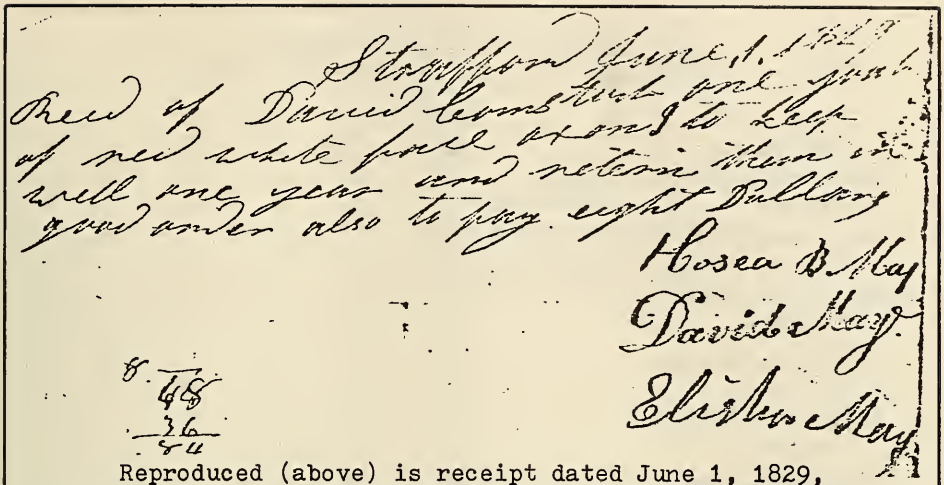
The names of Hezekiah and Asa appear on a memorial plaque at Dufferin Heights, honoring pioneer settlers of the Stanstead area.

Back in Strafford, vital records reveal little about the daughters of Hezekiah and Elizabeth. Polley married a man with the surname Evans and continued to live in Strafford. Nothing was found concerning the marriages of Betty and Hannah.

When the census of 1800 was taken, Hezekiah and Elizabeth were still living in Strafford. The only other person in the household was a male in the 16-26 age bracket. Apparently he was Hezekiah, Jr., 25 at the time and not yet married.

The census of 1800 revealed interesting data about other Mays of Vermont.

Stephen May, who lived in Fairlee in 1791, was still in that town with five in the household besides Stephen and his wife. There were four boys and a girl, all under age 16.



Reproduced (above) is receipt dated June 1, 1829, in which Elisha May and sons Hosea and David take possession from David Comstock of "one yoke of red white face oxen & to keep well one year and return them in good order also to pay eight Dollars."

(Courtesy of Strafford Historical Society)

Thomas May, a resident of Fairlee when the count was made in 1791, was in Bradford in 1800. The latter census shows there were five females in the household, three of them being under 10 years of age. Besides Thomas there were five additional males in the home, two between 16 and 26 and three under age 10.

David and Samuel May, in Brattleboro in 1791, were living in Wilmington in 1800. The 1800 census shows that David was somewhat older than Samuel, leading to the possible conclusion that David may have been either Samuel's father or an elder brother. There were three other persons in David's household besides the female who is presumed to have been his wife. The three, two females and one male, all were in the 16-to-26 age bracket.

Samuel May, however, had a younger family. The census indicates he and his wife were then between 26 and 45 years of age and there were five children in the household -- three boys and two girls, all under age 10.

The rapid growth of Vermont following statehood is reflected in the increased occurrence of the May name in the U. S. Census of 1800. There had been only seven May households when the first census was taken in 1791. In 1800 the total was eighteen.

MAY FAMILIES LIVING IN VERMONT,
ACCORDING TO THE U. S. CENSUS OF 1800

Name, Town, County		Under 10	10 16	16 26	26 45	45, Up
AMOS, Marlboro, Windham	Males	2	0	1	0	0
	Females	0	0	1	0	0
ASA, Barre, Orange		2	0	0	1	0
		1	0	0	1	0
ASA, West Fairlee, Orange		1	1	0	1	0
		1	1	0	2	0
BENJAMIN, Canaan, Essex		0	1	4	1	1
		0	0	1	0	1
DAVID, Braintree, Orange		0	0	1	0	0
		1	0	1	0	0
DAVID, Wilmington, Windham		0	0	1	0	1
		0	0	2	0	1
DEXTER, Waterford, Caledonia		4	0	0	1	0
		2	0	0	1	0
ELEAZER, Westminster, Windham		1	0	0	1	0
		1	0	2	0	0
ELISHA, Sharon, Orange		2	1	0	1	0
		1	1	0	1	0
HEZEKIAH, Strafford, Orange		0	0	1	0	1
		0	0	0	0	1
JAMES, Canaan, Essex		0	0	0	1	0
		1	1	0	1	0
JAMES, Barton, Orleans		2	0	1	0	0
		2	0	1	0	0
JOHN, Topsham, Orange		0	1	0	1	0
		0	0	1	0	0
JOHN, Barre, Orange		0	0	0	0	1
		0	0	0	0	1
JOHN, Fair Haven, Rutland		0	0	0	0	1
		0	0	0	0	1
SAMUEL, Wilmington, Windham		3	0	0	1	0
		2	0	0	1	0
STEPHEN, West Fairlee, Orange		2	2	0	1	0
		0	1	0	1	0
THOMAS, Bradford, Orange		3	0	1	0	0
		3	0	1	1	0

20

Strafford Becomes a Thriving Town

STRAFFORD WAS BECOMING a small-scale industrial center when the third U. S. Census was taken in 1810. At this time Hezekiah was 74. The progress and achievements of the new nation were leaving him behind, an aging man who had seen the peak of his productive years as a subject of King George in Colonial America.

Elizabeth was 70.

The sons and daughters they had reared were gone from the home. Of their sons only Elisha lived near to them. Asa and the junior Hezekiah were in Quebec. Harvey had resettled his family in western New York.

James Madison was now president of the United States, inaugurated in 1809. Hezekiah had lived under the administration of three earlier presidents -- George Washington, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson.

The enumerator, after counting the people of Strafford, wrote a summary of the town's gross product.

"In Strafford," he penned, "there is annually manufactured in private families linnen cloth 13,808 yards, of woollen cloth 10,309 yards, mixed 4,580, cotton 1,364, in performing of which they occupy 177 looms."

He wrote of the new mining company in which Strafford had large expectations.

"There is a copperas mine in this town -- owned and occupied by a corporation under a grant from the Legislature of State of Vermont by the name of Vermont Mineral Factory Company, Octr. 1809. Began operation April 1810. Flowed 20,000 tons of ore, erected 12 scaffolds & filled them with the ore,

realized about 4 tons of copperas. Manufactured as pure and of as good quality as any heretofore imported. This grant is principally owned by a company in Boston and carries on at very great expence."

Copperas is a green, crystalline, hydrated ferrous sulphate, used in the manufacture of fertilizers and in inks and in water purification.

Later known as the Strafford Copperas Works of the Vermont Copperas Company, the mine was discovered in 1793 by two men who were tapping sap-trees, according to Zadock Thompson in his "History of Vermont," published in 1842. "Tradition says they discovered a spontaneous combustion among the leaves," he wrote, "but it is more probable that they found copperas in some wet spot spontaneously formed."

President Monroe visited the works in the summer of 1817. The event probably provided the only opportunity in his lifetime for Hezekiah to see a president of the United States.

Copperas became an important and profitable industry in Strafford. By 1827 the company employed thirty to forty workers. In early days the firm operated at a loss, but it was producing a thousand tons per year in the 1840s, grossing $40,000. Fifteen hundred cords of wood were used annually in the production of the copperas.

Home-produced textiles, however, constituted Strafford's principal source of industrial income in 1810.

The census taker reported that Martin Barrett, who owned a carding machine, "manufactures annually 7,000 pounds, rolls which when done are worth $0.50 per pound amounting to $3500."

Some other comments by the census taker:

"Nathl. Morril owns & occupies a triphammer which prepares work for two blacksmiths forges.

"Isaac Moxley manufactures hats annually in the amount of $450.

"Jona. Skinner superintends a carding machine in which he manufactures annually 5,000 lb. of rolls when done worth 50 cents pr. lb. amounting to $2500.

"John Nelson has a clothiers workes, fulls & dresses annually 5000 yards cloth worth $1.25 cents pr. yd. amounting to $6250 dollars, dyes and presses 1900 yds. cloth worth 75 cents pr. yd. amounting to $1445.00 and presses annually 1000 yds. worth 75 cents pr. yd. amounting to $750.

"Cyril Chandler has a tannery in which he manufactures 40 hides annually worth when dressed $6 each, amounting to $240. -- also 70 skins worth $2.00 each when done, $140.00.

"Daniel Patterson tanns and dresses annually 25 hides worth $6.00 amounting to $150.00, also fifty skins worth $2 each amounting to $100.

"Peter Brewer has a tannery, annually tanns and dresses 45 hides worth $6 dollars each amounting to $270, also 70 skins worth 2 dollars each amounting to $140.00."

The total textiles output of the village, it was shown, amounted to $12,346 annually, being comprised of $4,695 in linen, $5,155 in woolen, $1,924 in mixed composition, and $573 in cotton. (Figures rounded to nearest dollar).

The Skinner carding-machine shop was located behind the Town House and was powered by a dam on the Pompanoosuc.

The 1810 count listed twenty-two May households in Vermont. They were:

Name	Town	County
Asa	Thetford	Orange
Benjamin	Concord	Essex
Benoni	Burlington	Chittenden
David	Wilmington	Windham
Dexter	Berlin	Orange
Eleazer	Westminster	Windham
Elisha	Concord	Essex
HEZEKIAH	Strafford	Orange
Huntington	Putney	Windham
James	Concord	Essex
James	Georgia	Franklin
James	Barton	Orleans
Joel	Wilmington	Windham
John	Bradford	Orange
John	Pittsford	Rutland
John	Georgia	Franklin
John	Burlington	Chittenden
Jonathan	Georgia	Franklin
Oliver	Concord	Essex
Samuel G.	Hinesburg	Chittenden
Stephen	Thetford	Orange
Thomas	Strafford	Orange

While some of these Mays were cousins of Hezekiah, the precise relationship of others is difficult to establish. The Elisha May in Essex County is not Hezekiah's son. For some reason -- unexplainable on the face of it -- the 1810 Census did not include Elisha May of Sharon as a head of household.

CLERK'S OFFICE

This is the Town Clerk's Office in Strafford today.
Its records go back to 1761.

21

Suffering and Poor, Hezekiah Dies at 83

ON NOVEMBER 21, 1815, Elizabeth May died. She was 75 years of age.

It was a difficult day for Hezekiah. They had been husband and wife for more than fifty-six years.

She had given him twelve children. They had shared the memory of losing three of those children in 1766 in Woodstock's Great Epidemic. And they suffered together when they lost two more sons in a single day in 1786.

They had made the arduous journey from their first home, in Woodstock, to the land of the Hampshire grants. They had lived in Strafford for forty-two years.

Now Hezekiah was alone . . . and he was 79.

Elizabeth May died as a good and faithful member of the Free Will Baptist Church. Only once had her name come up in regard to attendance . . . and the Baptists were strict about that! At a meeting on March 2, 1803, it was voted that they should send Brother Moses Brown to visit her, presumably because she had missed a few meetings.

The passing years had left their imprint on Hezekiah. No longer did he have the physical strength required to work a farm. A garden was a necessity. He could still earn small amounts from odd jobs in leather craftsmanship . . . repairing shoes or fixing broken harnesses. He could probably depend on neighboring farmers to use him as a hired hand when the work loads were heaviest.

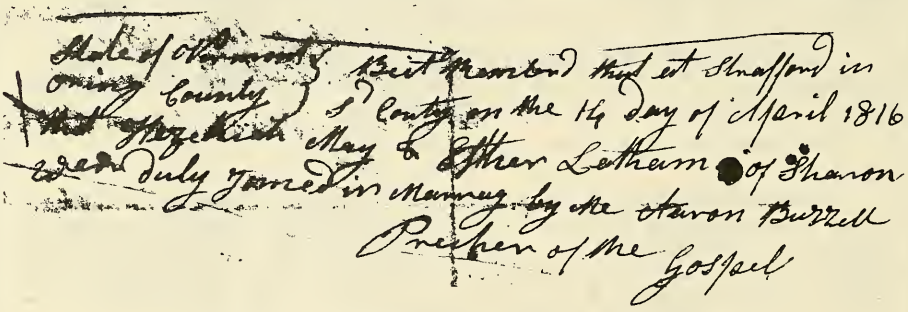
Chores remained. Firewood, like food, was essential to survival.

The weather -- for Hezekiah -- probably was more of a foe than it ever had been. In Strafford the summer climate is comfortable. But the winters are cold and long! With Elizabeth gone the winter of 1815-16 must have been hard to endure.

When March came, Hezekiah was 80 years old. And, weatherwise, 1816 was Vermont's worst year. There was frost in every month. It snowed in July and August! Farmers lost much of their crops, if not all. The diet for many Vermonters in that year included such as boiled thistles and fried weeds. It was a poor year, also, for both maple sap and wild honey.

However, one winter of bachelorhood was enough for Hezekiah. He wasn't a cook . . . and he was lonely. Living in nearby Sharon was Esther Latham, the former Esther Baker, now the widow of James Latham. On April 14, 1816, they were joined in marriage by the Rev. Aaron Buzzell, the Free Will Baptist minister.

Their life together would not be long. Hezekiah's health was failing. When the spring of 1819 arrived, he was a sick man . . . and he was a poor man. He was unable to meet his obligations. He was compelled by the circumstances to ask that some expenses -- part of them being amounts owed to physicians -- be put "on the book."



RECORD OF HEZEKIAH'S SECOND MARRIAGE

Reproduction of the original memo, in the handwriting of the Rev. Aaron Buzzell, of the marriage in Strafford of Hezekiah May and Esther Latham in 1816. It presumably was written immediately after the ceremony and then given to the Town Clerk for entry into the official records.

(Courtesy of Strafford Historical Society)

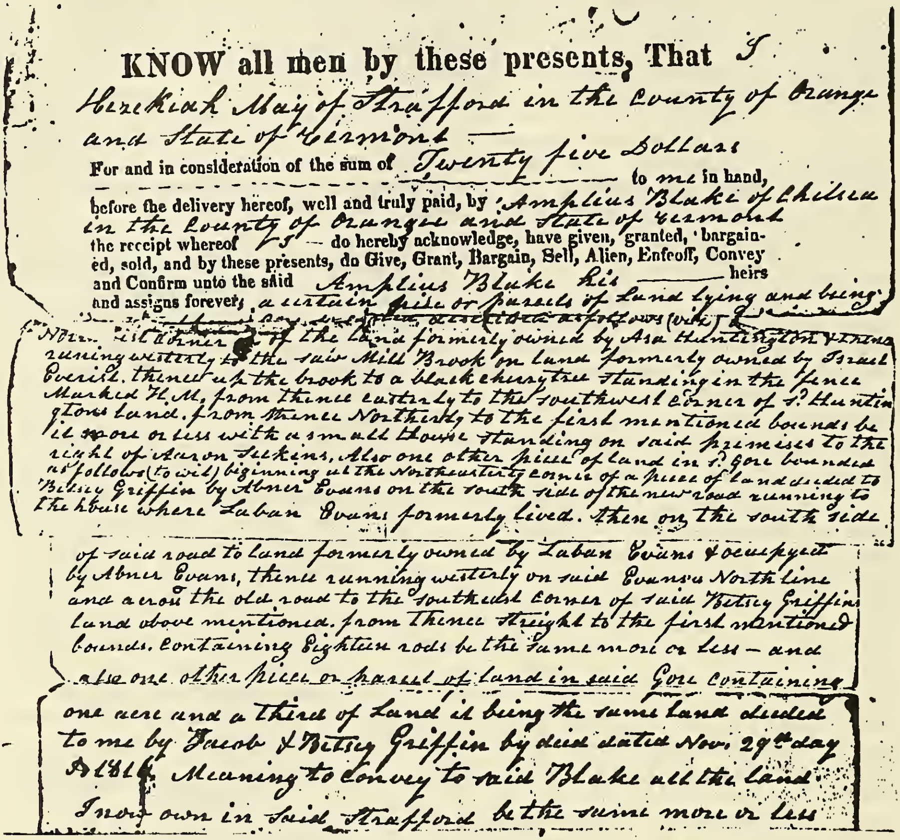
It must have been a disheartening experience -- a cruel turn in his life -- when Hezekiah signed an agreement in April, 1819, in which he pledged "all the land I now own" against a note in the sum of $22.13, held by his former neighbor, Amplius Blake.

Zerah Norton and Justice of the Peace Stephen Morrill witnessed as Hezekiah -- a man who earlier in life had bought and sold farming tracts of a hundred acres or more -- now put his name to a document which read:

"The conditions of the above deed is such that whereas I, the said Hezekiah May, did on the 9th day of April 1819 execute a certain promisory note of hand to the above named Amplius Blake for the sum of twenty two dollars and thirteen cents on interest and payable to said Blake or order on demand. Now if I the said Hezekiah May my heirs or assigns shall well and truly pay or cause to be paid, the above described Note and interest in one year from the date herof, then in that case the above deed to be nul and void, otherwise to be and remain in full force and affect in Law."

The deed Hezekiah signed "for and in consideration of the sum of twenty-five dollars . . . well and truly paid by Amplius Blake of Chelsea in the County of Orange and State of Vermont" conveyed to Mr. Blake and his heirs and assigns "a certain piece or parcel of land . . . described as follows (viz) beginning at the Northwest corner of the land formerly owned by Asa Huntington and thence running westerly to the Saw Mill Brook on land formerly owned by Israel Everist, thence up the brook to a black cherry tree standing in the fence marked H. M. from thence easterly to the southwest corner of sd Huntingtons land, from thence northerly to the first mentioned bounds be it more or less with a small house standing on said primises to the right of Aaron Seekins. Also one other piece of land in sd. gore bounded as follows (to wit) beginning at the northeasterly corner of a piece of land deeded to Betsey Griffin by Abner Evans on the south side of the new road running to the house where Laban Evans formerly lived, then on the south side of said road to land formerly owned by Laban Evans & occupyed by Abner Evans, thence running westerly on said Evans's north line and across the old road to the southeast corner of said Betsey Griffins land above mentioned, from thence straight to the first mentioned bounds, containing eighteen rods be the same more or less -- and also one other piece or parcel of land in said gore containing one acre and a third of land it being the same land deeded to me by Jacob and Betsey Griffin by deed dated Nov. 29th day AD 1816. Meaning to convey to said Blake all the land I now own in said Strafford . . . "

Continued on Page 172



KNOW all men by these presents, That I
Hezekiah May of Strafford in the County of Orange
and State of Vermont
For and in consideration of the sum of Twenty five Dollars to me in hand,
before the delivery hereof, well and truly paid, by Amplius Blake of Chelsea
in the County of Orange and State of Vermont
the receipt whereof I — do hereby acknowledge, have given, granted, bargained, sold, and by these presents, do Give, Grant, Bargain, Sell, Alien, Enfeoff, Convey and Confirm unto the said Amplius Blake his heirs and assigns forever; a certain piece or parcels of land lying and being [illegible] described as follows (viz) [illegible]
North [illegible] corner of the land formerly owned by Asa Huntington thence running westerly to the said Mill Brook on land formerly owned by Israel Averill. thence up the brook to a black cherry tree standing in the fence Marked H.M. from thence easterly to the southwest corner of sd Huntingtons land. from thence Northerly to the first mentioned bounds be it more or less with a small house standing on said premises to the right of Aaron Seekins. Also one other piece of land in sd Gore bounded as follows (to wit) beginning at the Northeasterly corner of a piece of land deeded to Betsey Griffin by Abner Evans on the south side of the new road running to the house where Laban Evans formerly lived. then on the south side of said road to land formerly owned by Laban Evans & occupyed by Abner Evans, thence running westerly on said Evans's North line and across the old road to the southeast corner of said Betsey Griffins land above mentioned. from thence straight to the first mentioned bounds. Containing Eighteen rods be the same more or less — and also one other piece or parcel of land in said Gore containing one acre and a third of land it being the same land deeded to me by Jacob & Betsey Griffin by deed dated Nov. 29th day AD 1816 Meaning to convey to said Blake all the land I now own in said Strafford be the same more or less

"ALL THE LAND I NOW OWN" PLEDGED FOR $22.13!

This is the contract of April 10, 1819, in which Hezekiah May signed away "all the land I now own" in Strafford unless he or his heirs paid within one year a promisory note for $22.13 held by Amplius Blake. (Reproduction of the instrument is divided into two parts on this and the next page). Hezekiah died in 1819. Blake did not get the land.

TO HAVE and to HOLD the said granted Premises, with all the privileges and Appertenances to the same belonging to him the said Amplius Blake his heirs and assigns, to his & their only proper use and benefit, forever. And I the said Hezekiah May my heirs, executors and administrators, do hereby covenant, grant, and agree to and with the said Amplius Blake his ——— heirs and assigns, that until the delivering hereof I am ——— the lawful owner of said premises, lawfully seized and possessed thereof in my own right in fee simple, and have full power and lawful authority to grant and convey the same in the manner aforesaid: That the premises are free of all incumbrances whatsoever. And that I ——— the said Hezekiah May my ——— heirs, executors and administrators, shall and will warrant the same to the said Amplius Blake his ——— heirs and assigns against the lawful claims and demand of any Person or persons whomsoever. The conditions of the above deed is such that whereas I the said Hezekiah May did on the 9th day of April 1819 execute a certain promisory note of hand to the above named Amplius Blake for the sum of twenty two Dollars and thirteen cents on interest, and payable to said Blake or order on demand. Now if I the said Hezekiah May my heirs or assigns shall well and truly pay or cause to be paid the above described Note and interest on one year from the date hereof, then in that case the above deed to be null and void, otherwise to be and remain in full force and effect in Law. ———

IN Testimony whereof, I ——— have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this 10th day of April A. D. one Thousand Eight Hundred and 19.

Signed, Sealed, and delivered in presence of } Hezekiah May

Stephen Morrill

STATE OF Vermont } Strafford April 10th 1819
Orange COUNTY, ss. }

PERSONALLY appeared Hezekiah May ——— Signer and Sealer of the foregoing Instrument, and acknowledged the same to be his free Act and Deed.

Before me, Stephen Morrill JUSTICE OF PEACE.

(This deed is the property of the Vermont Historical Society and is reproduced with the permission of that organization).

Within a few weeks Hezekiah May was dead.

Considering that he owed three doctors a sum in excess of fifteen dollars, it would seem that his last illness was a somewhat long and costly one. A physicians' fee table at the time points to such a conclusion. For a house visit within a mile, the physician's charge was fifty cents. He would add twenty-five cents for each additional mile and twenty-five cents more if the visit required his "rising in the night" (which was intended to mean from 10 P. M. till sunrise).

It is difficult now -- more than a hundred and sixty years later -- to know what was Hezekiah's final illness. In fact, even the exact date of his death remains unknown; it was not entered in the town's Vital Records.

One thing indicates Hezekiah died of an ailment which was difficult to treat -- perhaps cancer. It is that in his last days, Esther summoned Dr. Albegenes Pierce. This physician had achieved some degree of fame in the Strafford area as being one doctor of medicine who might be skilled enough to save a stricken one after all others had failed.

If Hezekiah May was a cancer case, it is an interesting question as to whether or not he was given one of the commonly administered remedies of those years. "Curtis' Recipes, Medical and Miscellaneous," published in Amherst, New Hampshire, in 1819, offered this treatment:

> CANCER -- The tail of a Lizzard boiled, produces a gravy or broth, which being drunk a few times, cures radically, the most inveterate cancer.

Regardless, Dr. Pierce's skill was to no avail.

Hezekiah died intestate. It did not matter. He had so little left, there was small need for a will.

Esther May petitioned the Hon. Elisha Thayer, judge of the Court of Probate for the District of Bradford to settle Hezekiah's remaining affairs.

Judge Thayer appointed Zerah Norton, Seth Norton and Ebenezer Dyer to make an inventory of Hezekiah's real and personal estate. They appeared on July 6 before Justice of the Peace Martin Barrett to make oath "that they would faithfully discharge the trust reposed in them."

On the following day, July 7, the trio inventoried and appraised Hezekiah's real estate and personal goods. They put a value of $90 on the acre and a half of land "and the buildings thereon" where Hezekiah and Elizabeth were living. They appraised an additional one and one-third acres "adjoining the other on the south" at $15 per acre, or $20. The total worth of real estate: $110.

Hezekiah's personal estate was appraised at $66.23. The most valuable item in the inventory was "feather bed and pillows" at $12. His shoemaker's bench, tools, and lasts were appraised at $4.01.

The three men itemized each article of Hezekiah's clothing -- even to "one pair butternut colord stockins," which were assigned a value of 13 cents. They listed the house furnishings, the bedding, tablecloth, the cooking utensils, cups and saucers, "one glass tumbler" at 6 cents, his cream churn, two cider barrels, a meat barrel, a "black tin teapot," a tea cannister, a few bottles and jugs, a milk pail.

They listed his garden and wood-cutting tools -- an ax, a hoe, an iron wedge, a grindstone.

Hezekiah left "one shoat," appraised at $3.50, which most likely had been destined for his meat barrel, valued at 58 cents.

The total of all of personal estate, the men decided, was $66.23. (See list).

The inventory was reported to Judge Thayer on August 31, at which time, acting on the request of Esther, the court assigned to her "for her own use and benefit" the whole of Hezekiah's personal estate excepting the ax, hoe, beatle rings and wedge, old casks, grindstone, and the shoemaker's tools, bench and lasts.

On December 29, Commissioners Seth and Zerah Norton and Ebenezer Dyer completed their list of demands against the estate. Hezekiah's debts added to $55.52. Included among them was $9.02, "found due to Doct. Albegenes Pierce, a charge against the deceased in his last sickness"; $3, due to "Doctor Baldwin on book"; $3.15, due to "Doctor Sabin by a note and book."

Two items in the demands against Hezekiah's estate form a picture of the 83-year-old man's death -- in the midst of near poverty -- in 1819 Vermont. The entries:

"Found due to Charles Reed for a Coffin $2.75
Found due to Josiah Kendal for digging grave . 1.00"

It is believed that Hezekiah — and probably Elizabeth before him — was buried in the Kibling Cemetery. It is situated between the villages of Strafford and South Strafford, not far from the small piece of land where Hezekiah lived the final few years of his life. It is a pretty Vermont hillside in which the earthly remains of Hezekiah and Elizabeth rest eternally. No gravestone is to be found; it is unlikely there ever was one.

Amplius Blake did not get "all the land I now own" as a

result of the deed Hezekiah signed shortly before his death. The note, somehow, had been paid.

Hezekiah's debts, however, had to be settled from proceeds of his scanty estate. At a session of the Court of Probate on February 29, 1820, Judge Thayer issued an order to "Esther May, administratrix . . . to sell at public vendue or private sale as much of the real estate of said deceased as will raise the sum of eighty three dollars & sixty nine cents, it appearing that the personal estate of deceased is insufficient by that sum to pay the debts, assignments and expenses of settling said estate."

Appearing before Justice of the Peace Ebenezer Dyer on March 21, 1820, Esther May made "her mark" on a deed in which she sold Hezekiah's real estate for the exact sum required to pay the debts — $83.69. The buyer was Oliver Cook. The land was described exactly as in the nullified deed of Mr. Blake. Included in the sale of the land was "a small house on it" . . . the house that had been the final home in this life of Hezekiah May, a soldier in the Revolution.

Esther May died on October 15, 1827. She was 79.

KIBLING CEMETERY — BEFORE SPRING MOWING

WHERE HEZEKIAH MAY LIVED

A view of the picturesque rural land, looking down the road from South Strafford village into the corner of Strafford Township where Hezekiah May lived during the final years of his life. Running alongside the road is Sawmill Brook, mentioned in the deed's description.

(Photo by E. Gwenda Smith)

An inventory of the estate of Hezekiah May late of Strafford in the County of Orange deceased appraised upon oath by us the subscribers duly appointed to that service by the Hon. Elisha Thayer Esqr judge of the court of the Court of Probate for the district of Bradford Viz.

Real Estate

One acre and half of land and the buildings thereon - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	$90.00
One acre & one third of an acre adjoining the other on the south at $15 pr acre	20.00
	$110.00

Personal Estate

One hat .42 cents--one black straitbodied coat $2.50 - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	$2.92
One brown straitbodied do. .50--one black jacket .25--one do. .13 - - - - - - -	0.88
One pair cotton trouser .50--one woolin frock .34--one pair woolen shirts .67 -	1.51
One pair linnen shirts 1.34--one pair linnen trousers .34 - - - - - - - - - - -	1.68
One pair light blue woolen stockins .25--one pair butternut colord stockins .13	0.38
One pair do. navy blue .25--one pair brown do. .17--one pair kidskin boots $2.50	2.92
One bedsted, cord and underbed 1.17--one feather bed and pillows 12. - - - - - -	13.17
One dark woolen bed quilt 3.--one do. brown 1.50 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	4.50
One coverlet red & black 3.50--one do. w. black .50--one checkered bed blanket 2.50	6.25
One white woolen blanket 1.67--one pair do. 1.50--one pair linnen sheets 1.25 -	4.42
One pair cotton sheets 2.--one cotton sheet .50--one pair linnen do. 1.50 - - -	4.00
One linnen tablecloth .25--two pair linnen pillow cases .37 - - - - - - - - - -	0.62
Two meal bags .67--one shoemaker's hammer, alls, blades & tacks 1. - - - - - -	1.67
One shoemaker's bench & tools 1.34--one bedstead & bed cord .75 - - - - - - - -	2.09
17 lasts for shoes .50--one pair stilyards .50--one looking glass .67 - - - - -	1.67
One cream churn .34--two cider barrels 1.--one meat barrel .58 - - - - - - - - -	1.92
One venegar tub .34--one meal chest .34--one small chest .58 - - - - - - - - -	1.26
One red chest with one draw in it .67--one firkin .83 - - - - - - - - - - - - -	1.50
Crane & four hooks .50--one iron pot .58--one dish kettle .42 - - - - - - - - -	1.50
One bake kettle .67--one iron bason .42--one spider .50 - - - - - - - - - - - -	1.59
Tea kettle .60--one ax .42--one hoe .13--one iron wedge .30 - - - - - - - - - -	.85
Beatle rings .34--two grain casks .50--one milk pail .17 - - - - - - - - - - -	1.01
One pair shears .13--two baskets .25--black tin teapot .50--tea cannister .13 -	1.01
White earthen mug .12--puter platter .25--two white earthen plates .06 - - - - -	0.43
One glass tumbler .06--one two quart jug .10--four cups & saucers .08 - - - - -	0.24
One table .25--one great chair .34--two kitchen chairs .17 - - - - - - - - - -	0.76
One square bottle .13--one shoat 3.50--one grindstone .25 - - - - - - - - - - -	3.88
	$66.23

The above and within articles appraised by us the subscribers
this 7th day of July AD 1819 Zerah Norton)
Seth Norton) appraisers
Ebenezer Dyer)

State of Vermont, Bradford district Ss Strafford July 6th 1819 the within named Ebenezer Dyer, Seth Norton & Zerah personally appeared & made solemn oath that they would faithfully discharge the trust reposed in them by the within warrant before me Martin Barrett justice peace

Returned, August 31st 1819 accepted and ordered to be recorded
Attest E. Thayer judge of probate

On the request of Esther May widow of Hezekiah May late of Strafford decd the whole of the personal estate of the sd deceasd is assigned to her for her own use and benefit as the same was inventoried and appraised except the following articles --

One ax .42--one hoe .13 -	0.55
Beatle rings and wedge .64--old casks .50--grindstone .25 - - - - - - - - - -	1.39
Shoemaker tools, bench and lasts -	2.84
	$4.70

August 31st 1819 Elisha Thayer Judge of Probate

A true record attest Wm Kiles probate register

INVENTORY OF THE ESTATE OF HEZEKIAH MAY

Those demand against the Estate of Hezekiah May deceased

Found due on book account to Joseph & Daniel Morriss - - - -	$1.26
Found due to Doctor Sabin by note & book - - - - - - - - - -	3.15
Found due to Doct. Albegenes Pierce a charge against the deceased in his last sickness - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	9.02
Found due to Charles Reed for a Coffin - - - - - - - - - - -	2.75
Found due to Norris & Frary in Co. for articles that the deceased filed that he was in want of to be credited to him in his last sickness for articles that the commissioners suppose that he could not well do without -	4.72
Found due to Norris & Frary on old account - - - - - - - - -	0.78
Found due to George Perkins - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	2.20
Found due to Reuben Blanchard on book - - - - - - - - - - -	2.48
Found due to Cyntha May on book - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	15.16
Found due to Doctor Baldwin on book - - - - - - - - - - - -	3.00
Found due to Eunice Evens on book - - - - - - - - - - - - -	4.00
Found due to Martin Barret on book - - - - - - - - - - - - -	6.00
Found due to Josiah Kendal for digging grave - - - - - - - -	1.00
	$55.52

Strafford December 29th 1819 we the undersigners this one & the last time of allowed & adjusted the above accounts as witness our hands

Seth Norton)
Ebenezer Dyer) Comrs.
Zerah Norton)

Ebenr Dyer apt allowed

Seth Norton)
Zerah Norton)

State of Vermont Bradford District Ss -- Strafford July 6th AD 1819 the within named Ebenezer Dyer, Seth Norton & Zerah Norton personally appeared & made solemn oath that they would faithfully discharge the trust reposed in them by the within Commission Before me Martin Barrett justice peace Thetford Jany 25th 1820 accepted & ordered to be recorded

Attest E. Thayer Judge of Probate

A true record attest Wm Kiles Probate Register

CLAIMS AGAINST THE ESTATE OF HEZEKIAH MAY
AS SUBMITTED TO THE PROBATE COURT

To all to whom these presents shall come - - - -
Whereas I Esther May of Strafford in the County of Orange and State of Vermont administratrix upon the estate of Hezekiah May late of sd Strafford deceased by an order of the Court of Probate for the district of Bradford which was begun and holden at Vershire on the 29 day of February 1820 was licenced to sell so much of the real estate of said deceased as would raise the sum of eighty three dollars sixty nine ¢ for the payment of his just debts with cost of settlement

Therefore know ye that I the said Esther May administratrix as aforesaid as well by virtue of the Dower & authority to me given as aforesaid as in consideration of the sum of Eighty three dollars sixty nine cents to me in hand paid by Oliver Cook of Strafford in said Orange County the receipt is hereof I do hereby acknowledge do hereby in said capasaty bargain sell grant convey and confirm unto him the said Oliver Cook his heirs and assigns forever a certain piece or parcel of land lying and being in said Strafford described as follows (to wit) beginning at the northwest corner of the land formerly owned by Asa Huntington and thence running westerly to the sawmill brook on the land formerly owned by Israel Everist thence up the brook to a black cherry tree standing in the fence marked H. M. from thence easterly to the southwest corner of sd Huntington land, from thence northerly to the firstmentioned bound be the same more or less with a small house on it and one other piece of land which was conveyed to Hezekiah May by Jacob & Betsey Griffin by-deed dated Nov. 29 1816 contain one acre and a third of land be the same more or less meaning to convey all the above described premises except the widow thirds or dower ---
To have and to hold the same with all the privileges and appurtenances thereof to him the said Oliver Cook his heirs and assigns forever. And I do hereby in the cappasaty afsd. covenant with the said Oliver Cook his heirs and assigns that the said Hezekiah May died seized of the premises in fee simple and that I am duly licenced by said court to seek sale of the premises and that it is necessary the same should be sold for the purpose aforesaid, that I have in all things pursued the law in such case made and provided and that the said Oliver Cook offered the most for said premises and I do further in the capasaty aforesaid covenant to and with the said Oliver Cook his heirs and assigns that the premises are free and clear of all incumbrance and that I will warrant and defend the same against all lawful claims and demands of any person or persons whatsoever —

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 21st day of March one thousand eight hundred and twenty — Signed sealed and delivered in presence of

Josiah Root
Ebenezer Dyer

Esther her X mark May /seal/

State of Vermont)
Windsor County)

March 21st AD 1820 personally appeared Esther May the signer and sealer of the above or the within written instrument, and acknowledged the same to be her free act and deed before me

Ebenezer Dyer Justice Peace

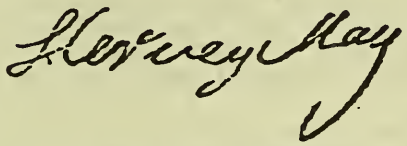
Recd at Strafford Town Clerks office for record April 3, 1820 recorded and examined in Book No 5 Pages 395 & 6 — attest Stephen Morrill Town Clerk

HIS LAND, HOUSE SOLD FOR $83.69

Transcribed text of the deed in which Hezekiah May's widow, Esther, sold his Strafford land "with a small house on it" to Oliver Cook of Strafford for $83.69, the sum required to pay demands against his estate.

PART 3

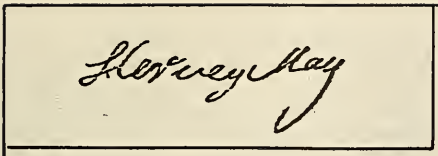
A NEW ENGLANDER
WHO WENT WEST ON
THE NIAGARA ROAD



of Strafford, Vermont,
and Conesus, New York

1773 -- ca 1845

A New Hampshire Native, Reared in Vermont,
He Took His Family Into the Genesee Country
Where He Farmed, Operated a Potashery and Tavern;
His Sons Moved Westward -- to Ohio and Michigan



22

Joanna Wedge Becomes Wife of Harvey May

HARVEY MAY, who spelled his name "Hervey" in those signatures which have been found, was born in Lyme, New Hampshire, as related earlier, and was brought to Strafford as an infant when Hezekiah and Elizabeth May resettled their family in Vermont in 1773.

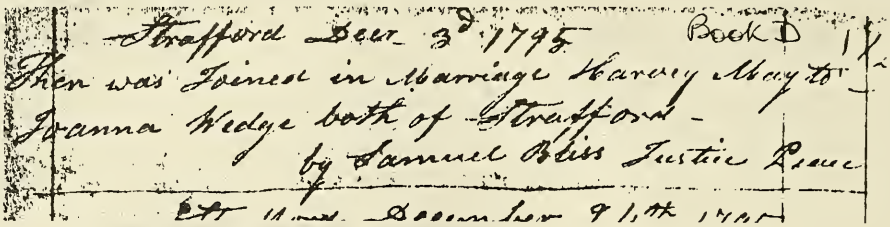
So Harvey was reared in Strafford where he came to know and professed his love for Joanna, a daughter of John and Annah Wedge. The young couple were joined in marriage on December 3, 1795, by Samuel Bliss, justice of the peace. There was, as yet, no settled minister in the village of Strafford and there was no Town Church.

Harvey and Joanna began their lives together on a farming tract near the village and Joanna gave birth to their first child, a boy, on October 5, 1796. The child was christened Isaac.

Two more sons were born before the century ended. They were Hiram, whose birth was on June 28, 1798, and Joab Young, born on March 5, 1800.

Joanna may have given birth to another child during the time she and Harvey lived in Strafford but, if so, the town records do not report it.

A petition from the Sixth School District regarding new boundary lines for the district, dated May 29, 1802, bears the signature "Hervey May." It is followed with an additional "Hervey May" signature in the same hand, followed by what appears to be a scrawled abbreviation of "Junior." Why was this? There is no record of the birth at any time of a Harvey Junior. Was Joanna carrying a child at the time and Harvey, in jest, indicated his anticipation of another son? Census data of a much later time show a daughter was born to the


Strafford Decr 3d 1795 Book D 1½
Then was Joined in Marriage Harvey May to
Joanna Wedge both of Strafford -
by Samuel Bliss Justice Peace
Ett Hard December 9th 1795

Entry in Strafford Town Records, Book D, Page 121, showing marriage on December 3, 1795, of Harvey May and Joanna Wedge, by Samuel Bliss, justice of the peace.

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couple in Vermont. Strafford records do not confirm this.

Harvey and Joanna remained in Strafford for approximately eight years from their marriage date and Harvey exhibited an interest in community affairs.

The Sixth School District was in the central-eastern part of the township near the boundary with Thetford. The petition Harvey signed said:

> "To the Honorable Committee appointed by the town of Strafford, these are to show the minds of the inhabitance of the Sixth School District that are for dividing the district in the center of the land in said district beginning at the ancient eight rod road north and south through the town then to run to Thetford line, whose names are hereunto set, allowing the district to be as big as to take two tiers of lots to the north of the road by John Powel's house, this 29th day of May 1802."

Around this time -- or soon thereafter -- Harvey and several others farming in Strafford learned about an offer of large, inexpensive lots being made available in western New York.

Harvey and Joanna decided they would resettle in this land of the "new frontier." Among others who also made the same decision were Calvin Powell and Elias Chamberlin, whose signatures appeared with that of "Hervey" on the school petition.

In a deed dated "this 21st Day of April AD 1804," Harvey May -- again signing his name "Hervey" -- sold "for the sum of five hundred dollars to me in hand paid before the deliv-

ery hereof by Ezra Clark of Strafford" land described as being "seventy five acres of Land in sd Strafford, it being the southerly part of sd Lot No. 152 in the Third Division," but adding that seventy-one acres were surveyed to the original right of James Apthorp and four acres to the original right of Sampson Sheafe.

In making this sale Harvey became the first of Hezekiah's sons to dispose of Strafford land for the purpose of emigration. Later in the same year Hezekiah May, Jr., sold land as he prepared to move to Quebec.

Insofar as remaining close together in Vermont residence, Hezekiah's family now was breaking apart -- to seek what his sons envisioned as greater opportunity in newly opened farming lands.

It would be a long journey for a young couple traveling with small children.

It was difficult for Joanna, too.

They said their good-bys to their parents, other kinfolk and friends, knowing well they might never see them again.

JOANNA'S ANCESTRY

Joanna Wedge was born in Kent, Litchfield County, Connecticut, where her parents were married on January 26, 1768, by Daniel Lee, justice of the peace.

The Wedges, it is believed, moved to Strafford about the same time Mrs. Wedge's father did, in 1777.

John and Annah Wedge had a large family. Joanna had at least two brothers -- John Wedge, Jr., and Ezra Wedge -- both born in Kent. And she had at least three sisters, Roxanna, Ruhanna and Matilda. Roxanna, a name which Harvey and Joanna later would give one of their daughters, married Joseph C. Prescott in Strafford, then later moved to Bethany, New York. Ruhanna, born in Kent in 1770, became the wife of Isaac Baldwin. Matilda was born in Strafford on August 7, 1788. It seems certain there were others in the Wedge family who are not named here. John Wedge was listed in the 1790 Census of Vermont as head of a household in which there were two males of 16 and older (including John), two males under age 16, and five females.

Little is known concerning the ancestry of John Wedge. But Joanna's mother, Annah, was a descendant of Thomas Brown, Sr., of Westfield, Massachusetts, and of Colchester, Connecticut, after 1704. He married Hannah Lee, daughter of Walter and Mary Lee, at Springfield, Massachusetts, on April 8, 1687.

The first of their six children was Thomas Brown, Jr., born December 26, 1688.

Thomas Brown, Jr., and his wife, Sarah, were the parents of nine children, all born in Hebron, Connecticut. Their second son, Nathaniel, born in 1721, was Joanna Wedge's grandfather. Nathaniel and Esther Mack, daughter of Josiah and Abigail (Peterson) Mack, were wed in Hebron on February 17, 1744/45. Their children, born in Hebron or Kent, were:

JOSIAH	b.	Nov. 22, 1746
ESTHER		Feb. 3, 1748/9
ANNAH		Sep. 9, 1751
ELISABETH		June 16, 1753
HEMAN		Feb. 14, 1757
ABSOLOM		Oct. 2, 1759
NATHANIEL, JR.		Apr. 7, 1765

After Esther died in Kent on December 10, 1766, Nathaniel married Mary (Peters) Judd, widow of Phillip Judd, at New Milford, Connecticut. He resettled his family in Strafford in 1777.

The Browns were prominent in the Free Will Baptist Church.

Nathaniel died in Strafford in 1804. His widow, who later married John Parkhurst, died in Bethany in 1838. She was 95.

Annah Wedge's youngest brother, Nathaniel Brown, Jr., became a minister. He organized a Free Will Baptist Church in Bethany, the first of the denomination west of the Genesee River.

Annah's brother Heman was one of the Strafford men who enlisted in a Loyalist regiment under command of General Burgoyne in 1777. He died in Bethany in 1829.

23

Enterprising Harvey Moves to New York

WHEN HARVEY and Joanna May left Strafford for their new home in western New York they began an arduous journey of more than two hundred miles. They had to follow trails through eastern New York's mountains before they could find the flat land along the shore of Lake Ontario.

There is no diary to give an account of their adventure. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that they traveled alone. A number of Vermont families, including some of Harvey's neighbors, were enthusiastic about the offering of the Ontario County tracts at attractive prices. They were confident they would have good farms in the new area, a region dotted with lakes and streams . . . and not as rock-strewn and mountainous as Vermont.

Eastern New York was well known and fairly well developed, but western New York was still a sparsely settled wilderness. Yet, President George Washington had described the state as the "Seat of Empire."

Harvey May, who already had established himself as an energetic and enterprising individual, surely took with him the tools and domestic equipment he and Joanna would need to settle in their new home. So he probably traveled by wagon, the Mays being one family in what most likely was a small "wagon train."

At some point they had to cross the Adirondack Mountains, but the trails were known well enough to permit selection of a route which would be the least strenuous. Perhaps they entered New York from southern Vermont, using roads which had been built during the Revolutionary War. Near the juncture of the Mohawk and Hudson rivers, north of Albany, they could have found the road which twisted across New York to

Niagara Falls. It crossed the "Mohocks Flats," the German Flats, dipped south of Oneida Lake, then snaked its way westward along the northern tips of the lakes Cayuga, Seneca and Canandaigua.

Traveling south from the Niagara Road at the proper point, the New York "pioneers" found the Genesee Country -- the lake-dotted rich land of western New York which is traversed by the Genesee, a river rising in the Alleghenies of northern Pennsylvania and flowing more than a hundred and fifty miles to Lake Ontario. At the river's mouth was the small settlement which was to become the city of Rochester.

To understand the courage and spirit demonstrated by Harvey and Joanna in their westward trek from Vermont, one needs only to take note of the size and development of the fledgling republic at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. George Washington's death was a recent event. Thomas Jefferson had succeeded John Adams as the third president. The new nation was not so much a nation as it was a dream or plan of a nation. Only four states thus far had joined the original thirteen colonies in the construction of a republic. Vermont had been first, in 1791. Then followed Kentucky in 1792, Tennessee in 1796 and Ohio in 1803.

Well-dressed men still wore knee breeches and three-cornered hats. Seventy-five per cent of the new "Americans" made their living by farming -- raising an assortment of food for their own tables and those of nearby towns. The total population in 1800 was 5,300,000 . . . and that included the count of people in four would-be states which had not yet been admitted into the Union: Indiana, Maine, Mississippi and Ohio.

Politically, there still was bickering about what kind of a government was wanted. It seems probable that Harvey and Joanna agreed with the opinion shared by most, and best expressed by Jefferson, who said "that government governs best that governs least."

Twenty-seven years earlier Harvey May and others attracted to the Genesee Country would have had good reason to stay away from it: plundering and murdering Indians. By 1805, however, this peril was no longer present.

The Genesee Country, of course, had many early settlers who had lived at peace with the Indians. The white men encountered no great difficulty in establishing friendship with the red men and these friendships often were mutually beneficial. The hostility of the Indians towards the settlers became a major problem in 1778 and '79. Senecas in middle and western New York turned on settlers when they were encouraged to do

so by Tories who sought to use the savagery of aggravated Indians as an offensive weapon in their efforts to crush the American revolution.

Western New York was populated with a huge number of Indians of the Iroquois tribe. It has been estimated that there were about fifty thousand Iroquoian-speaking Indians making up the confederacy known as the Five Nations. This confederation included the Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga and Seneca peoples. And, after 1722, the confederacy was joined by the Tuscaroras to form the Six Nations.

It was the Senecas who dominated that part of New York -- now identified as Livingston County -- where Harvey May was to establish his home in 1805. Their principal "town" was on the Genesee Flats in the western part of Livingston County. There were several smaller villages in the area. The town of Conesus was within the jurisdiction of the Senecas and they occupied a village at the head of Conesus Lake.

A quarter century before Harvey arrived in the area, the Continental Congress, responding to reports of an Indian uprising in 1778, ordered that an army be sent into the Seneca country to restore order. General Washington asked General John Sullivan to lead such a force.

Headquarters for Sullivan's army was established at Easton, Pennsylvania, excepting for a division headed by General James Clinton which was to link up with General Sullivan's troops. The total force of the army would be four thousand men.

On June 18, 1779, Sullivan's units left Easton on a march to the town of Wyoming, which had been the scene of a bloody massacre. The army reached Wyoming on June 23 and found it to be "a melancholy scene of desolation, in ruined houses, wasted fields, fatherless children and widows," according to a journal of the march. "These unhappy people," it was said in the journal, "after living in constant fear, for some time were attacked by a large body of Indians, in July of 1778, and out of four hundred humane soules, only sixty were left to tell the tale, and most of these were of those who made their escape into the mountains."

At Wyoming, General Sullivan headed an army comprised of eighty-five officers, chaplains and surgeons; one hundred and forty-two drummers and fifers, including drum and fife majors; and two thousand, three hundred and twelve rank-and-file men.

General Clinton's brigade was comprised of five New York and Massachusetts regiments which contained an additional fourteen hundred rank-and-file men, thus creating a total army of more than thirty-seven hundred fighting men to penetrate the Indian-dominated country.

On September 12 Sullivan's army entered the town of Conesus and encamped on flats almost at the exact site where Harvey May, about thirty years later, established a potashery and general store. On September 14, Sullivan found the Indian town called Great Chenesee. On the following day the army destroyed the Seneca village, comprised of a hundred homes. The soldiers piled twenty thousand bushels of grain in the houses and set them afire. About fifteen hundred apple trees were destroyed. The valley was turned into ruins.

Much has been written about Sullivan's march, which ended when the army, after covering the last hundred and fifty-six miles in eight days, through mountainous country, arrived back at Easton on October 15. The Indian uprising had been ended!

In years prior to the Indian uprising, both Massachusetts and New York had claimed pre-emptive rights to much of the land in western New York. The claim of Massachusetts was based on a grant to the Council of Plymouth which said, in effect, that the Massachusetts Colony extended to the Pacific Ocean. However, on December 16, 1786, the two states entered into a compact in which Massachusetts released to New York nearly all of the territory which had been claimed by New York as being under its jurisdiction.

MARKER AT FOOTE'S CORNERS (FORMERLY MAY'S CORNERS)

The history of the development of Conesus explains how and why the lots were offered . . . and provides a rough conception of their value.

Under a stipulation in the compact between New York and Massachusetts two men, Nathaniel Gorham and Oliver Phelps, were granted the purchase from Massachusetts for three hundred thousand pounds the principal tract described in the compact. They were required, however, to also achieve a settlement with the Indians. This they did in a treaty on July 8, 1788, in which the Indians sold their rights for twenty-one hundred pounds in New York currency.

Gorham and Phelps thusly came into possession of land which now comprises the New York counties of Livingston, Ontario, Steuben and Yates, most of Monroe, part of Genesee and about half of Allegany.

Via a deed dated November 17, 1790, Gorham and his wife, Mary, conveyed the huge tract -- with certain reservations -- to Robert Morris of Philadelphia. Morris and his wife con-

THE WESTWARD JOURNEY

Shaded area in lower left corner of 1796 map of New York indicates land where Harvey May resettled his family after arduous journey from Vermont in which he most likely followed the Niagara Road from the "Mohocks Flats" to Ontario County in the Genesee Country of western New York.

veyed the same tract, by deed dated April 11, 1792, to Charles Williamson.

Mr. Williamson, a resident of Ontario County, was reported to be an agent of Sir William Pulteney and reportedly had come to America from England to make land purchases for Sir William. At the time, aliens were denied the right to hold or sell land in New York. However, the state legislature on April 2, 1798, passed an act which, with certain restrictions, gave such rights to aliens. On March 31, 1801, Williamson and his wife, Abigail, conveyed the tract to Pulteney.

Pulteney and William Bowers, to whom Pulteney sold some of the land, laid out the town of Conesus, a part of which was originally known as Freeport and situated in what was then a part of Ontario County. The lots were numbered from 1 through 139. Five of them were given to the Canandaigua Academy as a charitable gift. Then there was a division of the lots between the owners. Soon after that Mr. Bowers died; his lots went to his five children: John Bowers, Mary Campbell, Rebecca Scott, Mary Ann Duane and Harriet Mumford. The heirs at once started selling their lots for as little as eight dollars per acre.

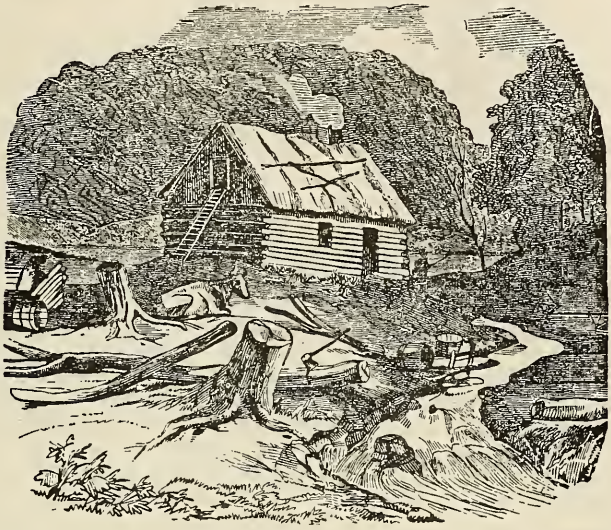
If Harvey May reached his destination via the Northern Route, as appears likely, his journey southward from the Niagara Road took him to Turkey Hill on a trail that terminated at the head of Conesus Lake.

Harvey purchased a tract identified as Pulteney Lot No. 24. It contained 149.75 acres.

One of the most important of the immediate tasks facing Harvey was the construction of a dwelling, a home built of logs from the trees he cut in clearing the land. He completed the abode in the spring of 1806.

William P. Boyd in his "History of the Town of Conesus" wrote a description of the early settlers' log homes and how they undertook the building of them.

"The houses of the pioneers," he wrote, "were of crude construction; built up from round logs, notched at both ends, and laid up in a four square manner, as they were cut from the trees that surrounded the sight of their domain. A few years afterwards, some of the early settlers, having more taste than others, hewed the logs into square timber, and laid them up in the same way. Some of the houses were larger than others, and more or less of them were divided off into two or more apartments. Some would have a second floor, which they would use a chamber, and was constructed by placing timbers across from side to side, about six or seven feet from the lower floor, and



TYPICAL LOG HOUSE OF WESTERN NEW YORK SETTLER
(From William P. Boyd's "History of Town of Conesus")

then covering them over with split logs or shake, for the floor, in place of boards.

"Between the logs, they drove a long wedge shaped strip of wood, and plastered over the same, to keep the cold out. For the construction of the roof, they used two kinds of materials, straw, shakes or barks."

The floor, Mr. Boyd tells us, "was mostly made from split basswood logs, by placing the round side down, and the flat side up, and then hewing them off to an even surface."

"After they had raised their houses," Mr. Boyd wrote, "their first thing was to cut a hole for a door or window. Sometimes for doors, they would hang up a blanket. Others would obtain enough boards to make the same. For windows, and windowglass, which could not be obtained, they would use greased paper or tanned skins of animals, hung up to let the light in.

"In raising their houses, it was the custom of the settlers to go far and near, to aid each other. Sometimes the ladies would accompany their husbands, and while the men was at work raising the house, they would spend the day in assisting the hostess in quilting, spinning, or some other kinds of work."

Describing the customs of early settlers, Mr. Boyd wrote:

"Their household duties, social relationship and religious gatherings were more on an equal footing. The poor and the rich enjoyed each others society, without any distinction. All that was required of either sex was a good character; and a person of a bad standing was discarded with all of their dignity.

"The settlers table was not laden with delicious food, such as pies, cakes, puddings and other eatables of the present day (1887), but such as johnny-cake, baked beans, potatoes, and wild meats from the forest. Some were able to keep cows, which supplied them with milk, which furnished many families more than half of their living. Their tables was not the richest piece of furniture, but often a box or chest, or a substitute made of poles, and covered with boards, and often without a table cloth. Their dishes also ranked in the same comparison; made principally of pewter, or brown clay. Their spoons of brass or some other cheap kind of metal. Their knives were of steel, but of a ruder quality than those of the present day.

"In many instances, the children were not allowed to come to the table, until they had arrived at a certain age. Often they were fed by placing a pan of milk with bread in it on the floor, and each child given a spoon so they could help themselves. Oftimes the children would become angry at each other, fearing that one was getting more than the other."

Clothing for all, the Conesus historian wrote, "was generally very scanty and made mostly of flax. This was spun and wove by the women. The hum of the old spinning wheels could be heard in every household. Whenever they went visiting, they would take their wheels under their arms, which would resound with their songs and conversation. So many knots was a day's work. And then at sunset, each would take baby and wheel, walk home, get supper for a large family, 'and wasn't much tired after all.'"

For want of shoes or boots, many of the people went barefoot. There were shoemakers, who went house to house and made shoes for the elders. Small children, however, usually had no footwear.

Mr. Boyd tells us that shoes for women and girls were made of cowhide with thick soles projecting.

"I've heard old people say, 'So that a mouse could run on the rim,'" he wrote. "Oftimes when they went to Church, they would take their shoes in their hands, and just before they reached the Church door, put them on, and on their return, take them off again."

Harvey May's lot was situated in what was identified in the U. S. Census of 1810 as Sparta Township of Ontario County. In the Census of 1820 his homestead was described as situated in Freeport, Ontario County. In 1821 a substantial portion of Ontario County, including Harvey May's land, became a part of the newly created Livingston County. This explains why some of Harvey's descendants in later years spoke of their original home as being in Livingston rather than in Ontario.

In 1825 the state legislature changed the name of the town from Freeport to Bowersville, in honor of William Bowers and his family. This proved to be an unpopular action. Responding to a petition, the legislature changed the name to Conesus, after the beautiful lake on the township's border.

The first legal town meeting had been held on April 4, 1820. Davenport Alger, another of the Vermonters who had resettled in New York, was chosen to be supervisor. Numerous other town officers were elected.

At that initial meeting several resolutions were approved, among them being:

"Voted to comply with the School Act and to raise fifty dollars for school purposes.

"Voted that hogs weighing over sixty pounds be free to run at large.

"Voted that male hogs weighing less than twenty-five pounds not to be allowed to run at large. Penalty, $1.

"Voted that male sheep not be allowed to run at large from the 15th of August to the 1st of December. Penalty, $2.

"Voted that male colts over eighteen months old should not be allowed to run at large. Penalty, $10."

After the several changes in name and the creation of Livingston County, Conesus emerged as a Livingston township, bounded on the north by Livonia, on the east by Canadice (Ontario County), on the south by Springwater and Sparta, and on the west by Groveland. It is an area of thirty-six square miles of fine agricultural land, its surface broken by ranges of hills.

Because Conesus was a "new frontier" in the early years of the Nineteenth Century, vital records were not kept as they were in communities which had been settled from a hundred to nearly two hundred years earlier. Most record keeping did not became well established until about 1850. Therefore,

family Bibles and the record books of churches, if any, are the principal sources of information on marriages, births and deaths. U. S. Census data, however, reveal identification of heads of households and the count of persons living in those households.

The composition of the family of Harvey and Joanna can be established on data reported at a reunion near York, Indiana, on September 8, 1911, of descendants of Roxana (May) Griggs, at the George Knapp home. Secretary Lizzie M. Smith told the gathering Roxana "was of a family of nine children, all of whom (with the exception of one) lived to a fairly old age."

The first census in which Harvey's family was listed in New York was the count of 1810. That census showed there was one male of age 26-45 (Harvey) and one female in that same age bracket (Joanna). There were two males of 10-16 age, three of under-10 age, and two females of under-10 age. The three eldest sons were born in Vermont: Isaac in 1796; Hiram in 1798; and Joab in 1800. So, after these, Harvey and Joanna had two more sons, born between 1800 and 1810. As Roxana was born in 1810, it appears she had an elder sister . . . perhaps born in Vermont, although there is no record of such birth to be found in Vermont records.

The census of 1820 lists Harvey's household as comprised of a male and female over the age of 45 (Harvey and Joanna) and eight children: two males of age 10-to-16; two males of age 16-to-26; one female of age 16-to-26; one of age 10-to-16; and two of under-10 age. Study of these statistics indicates that Isaac, now married, had left home; that Hiram and Joab remained in the household; and that there were two more sons at home who have not been positively identified. Of the couple's four daughters, all still at home in 1820, only Roxana can be named at this writing.

Although town records do not show that Harvey May ever held an elective office in Conesus, it is clear that he was an enterprising man, engaged in much more than the operation of his farm.

The small hamlet known as Foote's Corners, two miles north of the village of Conesus, was known as May's Corners until 1834 when its name was changed to honor Franklin Foote. This was after Mr. Foote built a three-story frame store building in the hamlet.

It was named originally in honor of Harvey May, who was the first settler there. The hamlet was developed on his land, not far from where he erected his first log house in 1806.

At this site (now crossed by New York Highway 15), Harvey generated a thriving business in potash, operated a small general store and shared ownership with Samuel Chapin in a tavern.

The tavern was built in 1811. Boyd, in his Conesus history, published in 1887, wrote:

> "This is the oldest tavern in town, and many lively times has been held within its walls. It has not been used as a tavern for over thirty years, and is now used as a tenant dwelling house."

The old building, modernized, remains at Foote's Corners, a large rural home. At a glance one can still see how the

LONG AGO IT WAS A LIVELY TAVERN

Main part of this farmhouse at Foote's Corners in Conesus Township of Livingston County, New York, once was the tavern, built in 1811, owned by Harvey May and Samuel Chapin.

two-story frame building provided upstairs bedroom accomodations for travelers in the period in which it was operated by Mr. May and Mr. Chapin, roughly from 1811 until about 1845.

Writing additionally about May's Corners, Mr. Boyd said:

"The first store kept at this place, was in the 'old red house' of Franklin Foot, that stands on the north side of the road leading across the flats. This was in operation at an early day, by Harvey May, who ran the same in connection to a potashery that he owned, and stood on the present sight of Hiram McNinch's dwelling house, on the south side of the creek.

"This store, though not overstocked with goods, proved of great value to the poor people; for they would save up their ashes, and take them to this Ashery, and there receive the scanty necessities of life, which otherwise they would have to go without. This mode of business was in operation for several years."

As in the case of the tavern, the "old red house" in which Harvey May conducted his potash and general store business still stands at Foote's Corners. It is a large, red barn, behind the farm dwelling which formerly was the tavern.

Leaching ashes to make potash was a dirty and unromantic business. But the early settlers knew they could always sell their product at a good price and receive cash. During the period of the American Revolution, a hundred pounds of potash would bring in four or five dollars, equivalent to the cost of five bushels of wheat or ten bushels of corn.

Potash was valuable because it was one of the major ingredients in the manufacturing of soap that was needed in cleaning woolens and linen. England in the Eighteenth Century had become the world's leading cloth manufacturer and it consumed thousands of tons of potash. As British forests were soon stripped of useful wood, the British government preferred that its industries import potash from the colonies instead of buying from Russia, its other main source.

The need for potash was so great that the American Revolution had little effect on its production and sale. About 1810, however, European scientists found a method of using sodium to clean textiles; the big market for potash collapsed. Nonetheless, there still remained a substantial need for the product in America. The leached ashes were required to make the lye which was so importantly needed in the making of soap.

Perhaps it was the fading market for potash that spurred Harvey May to join with Samuel Chapin in the tavern business.

May's Corners was not a dull place.

In his Conesus history, Mr. Boyd made a point of it being

THIS WAS HARVEY MAY'S STORE

Now a large barn behind a farmhouse at Foote's Corners, much of this structure once was the potashery and general store owned and operated by Harvey May.

"a noted place for amusements." He added:

"Here the early settlers held their horse-races, shooting-matches, trainings, and other amusements. The road running west across the flats, was their race-course. Here some of the most noted trotters and running horses of the country was placed against each other. Evenings and Saturday afternoons was seldom missed without some of these doings. Training days, would fill the place from far and near, and oftimes many of them would come, simply to get a piece of a loaf of ginger-bread, ten or twelve feet long, baked on a board. Shooting-matches was all of the toast, which consisted of shooting at a mark for a deer, or some other kind of game. At night, the sound of music was heard in the ballroom of the hotel, where the merry couple were trippling a waltz, schottische or quadrille, until the dawn of morning."

The early settlers in western New York enjoyed diversions from the hard work of improving a farm, but their fun and games did not keep them from observing the Sabbath -- with a dedication almost rivaling that of their colonial ancestors. Sermons often would be two hours, or more, in length, but the church goers did not complain.

During its earliest years of settlement, Conesus was without any organized religious society. About 1800, a few years before Harvey May's family came from Vermont, some Presbyterians commenced holding services at Buel's Hill, where the town of Livonia developed. At about the same time Baptists started holding meetings in private homes. In 1812 the Methodists began meetings at the John Miller residence.

In 1818 a society which called itself "The Christians" was organized at May's Corners. It was headed by the Rev. Sylvester Morris. The minister and his wife, Elizabeth, were early settlers at May's Corners. The society, however, existed for only a few years.

The scarcity of vital records for much of western New York prior to 1850 makes it difficult to compile a complete story of Harvey and Joanna May. It is known that they finished their lives in Conesus. Yet, there are only the data contained in the U. S. Census to show when each died.

In the 1830 census Harvey's household contained one male and one female over the age of 45 years, they presumably being Harvey and Joanna. When the census was taken in 1840 there was Harvey, a male over the age of 45, but no female of such age. Therefore, Joanna apparently died between 1830 and 1840. Harvey was not named in the 1850 census; so the conclusion may be drawn that he died between 1840 and 1850.

MARKER AT FOOTE'S CORNERS, FORMERLY MAY'S CORNERS
Part of home in background once was Harvey May's tavern

Although the date is not to be found, Harvey was buried in the Conesus Cemetery (where Joanna probably was buried). His grave is marked with two reddish-brown fieldstones, put there many years ago to mark the grave. There is no epitaph -- or anything other than family legend -- to indicate that it is the final place of rest for the man of May's Corners.

STONES MARKING HARVEY MAY'S GRAVE IN CONESUS CEMETERY

Isaac May

24

Isaac Goes to Ohio, Becomes a Preacher

ISAAC, THE ELDEST, was the first of the sons of Harvey and Joanna May to marry, the first to leave the homestead, the first to emigrate westward from New York.

He was 20 when he sought and won the hand of Rachel S. McMillen, 19. They were wed in 1816.

Rachel was born in Littleton Township, Grafton County, New Hampshire, on January 5, 1797. She was one of eleven children born to Samuel and Polley McMillen.

The McMillen family was in New Hampshire when the first census of United States was taken in 1790. Samuel left New Hampshire in 1813 to resettle in western New York. It was the same county (Ontario at the time) to which Harvey May had brought his family several years earlier. Thus, Rachel was 16 when she came to New York.

Isaac and Rachel first settled on a farm close to that of Harvey May. It was an area then identified as Freeport Township of Ontario County. Later its name was changed to Conesus Township after it became a part of Livingston County when Livingston was created in 1821.

The first child born to Isaac and Rachel was a boy, but he died soon after birth and was never given a name. Their second child was a daughter, named Emily. But she, too, died in infancy. The third child, a daughter christened Diantha, was born on October 10, 1819.

When the census was taken in 1820, Isaac was listed as a Freeport farmer with two females living in the household,

they presumably being Rachel and little Diantha.

Rachel gave birth to another daughter on March 29, 1822. She was christened Emily Louisa, named in part after the daughter who had died.

About the time Emily Louisa was born, Isaac was considering the attractiveness of Ohio where rich farm land was available at low cost. Ohio had been first settled in 1788 -- before Isaac was born -- but it had been a state since 1803 and its population was expanding rapidly.

Isaac probably had no problem in persuading Rachel that they should emigrate. Her father, Samuel McMillen, had taken his family to Ohio in 1818, settling in Thompson Township of Seneca County. So, in 1822, Isaac followed the path taken by his father-in-law.

Although Isaac's first purchase of Ohio land was in Seneca County, Samuel McMillen already had moved again. He bought a tract of land in 1821, situated in Green Creek Township of Sandusky County. He brought to that township its first fruit trees, the growth from apple and peach seeds he had planted while improving his farm in Seneca County.

A year after their arrival in Ohio, Isaac and Rachel resettled on the north ridge, near the northern line of York Township in Sandusky County. They were among the earliest to settle in that area.

In that same year, 1823, Rachel gave birth to a son. He was named James H. May. On January 24, 1825, she bore another daughter, Mary Ann. Their seventh child, her last, was a son to whom they gave the name William.

On October 26, 1829, Rachel May died at their farm in York. She was age 32 years, 9 months and 21 days. Isaac buried her in the McPherson Cemetery. Her grave is marked with a white stone, engraved "Rachel S. wife of Elder Isaac May. Died Oct. 26, 1829." Above her name, cut deeply into the stone, is the replica of a hand with the forefinger pointed towards the heavens.

Rachel's death left Isaac with five children, of whom the eldest was Diantha, then 10. Desperately in need of help in the care of his family, Isaac turned to Rachel's unmarried sister, 19-year-old Nancy McMillen.

Nancy, born on the McMillen farm in New Hampshire on September 11, 1810, became Isaac's second wife. They were married on January 13, 1830, seventy-nine days after Rachel's demise.

A deeply religious man, Isaac May already was an elder

THE REV. ISAAC MAY
1796-1874

(Photo Courtesy of The Rutherford B. Hayes Library)

in the Free Will Baptist Church when he and Nancy were wed. Basil Meek's "History of Sandusky County" (1909) comments about the Rev. Isaac May as a minister who "preached in this vicinity until within a few years preceding his death."

"He is well remembered by many who have listened to his sermons," Mr. Meek wrote.

And, taking note of the hardships of life in rural Ohio in those early years, he said of Isaac:

"The family had their full share of hardships. They came here when it required the utmost effort to feed and clothe a family. The daughters used to work in the field, doing manual labor, and often worked out for the neighbors."

Isaac May lived in an era when large families were wanted and needed. So it is not surprising the country preacher had one of the larger in the county. Nancy bore him ten children following the seven he had fathered by her sister.

Nancy's first child was a girl, born on July 9, 1831, and named Saphronia. Saphronia never married. She died on March 25, 1849, at age 17 years, 8 months, 16 days.

The gravestone for William May in the Ellsworth Cemetery in Sandusky County says he was 28 years and 10 days of age when he died on March 10, 1858. This is an obvious error for William's mother died in 1829. It is assumed, therefore, that William was born in 1829 -- perhaps a year or two earlier.

William shares a gravestone with a younger brother, Hiram, a Civil War casualty. There is question, however, whether or not Hiram actually was buried in Ellsworth Cemetery.

Hiram enrolled as a private in Company K, 100th Regiment, Ohio Voluntary Infantry, on August 7, 1862, at age 21. He died of "La Grippe" in Lexington, Kentucky, on November 11, 1862. Records of the Adjutant General's Office for Ohio show the body was "Interred in Section 4, Grave 121, Lexington, Kentucky." A graves registration card, however, says burial was on November 16, 1862, in the Ellsworth Cemetery -- which would be five days after his death. The Adjutant General's Department said it has no way of knowing which burial record is correct. As Hiram shares the stone with William, it is likely that he was and remains buried in Lexington and the addition of his name to the stone in Ohio was done as a memorial.

Samuel McMillen, Nancy May's father, died at his farm home in Sandusky County on June 19, 1831. He was buried in a grave alongside that of Rachel May in the McPherson Cemetery.

Polley M. McMillen, Samuel's widow, continued to live on their forty-acre Townsend Township farm for a number of years while she still had children at home. However, on April 5, 1849, close to eighteen years after her husband's death, Polley McMillen sold the farm to Isaac May for three hundred dollars. Her son, Luther P. McMillen, who later settled in Wisconsin, was a witness to the signing of the deed. By this time Ohio was rapidly increasing in population; there had been only thirty-two votes cast in the township's spring election of 1823, including Samuel McMillen.

The early settlers of Ohio had been a hardy breed; they had to be!

Sybil McMillen, a sister to Rachel and Nancy, was wed in 1825 to Norton Russell who, in 1822, had walked with three other young men the entire distance of four hundred miles from Livingston County, New York, to Sandusky County. He lived to the age of 97 years.

When Elder Isaac May's daughter, Emily L. Tew, died in 1896, the Fremont Weekly Journal commented in her obituary:

"Mrs. Tew always retained a vivid recollection of the hardships and deprivations of frontier life. The advantages for education were very limited. A rude log school house was reached by a blazed 'tree-path' through the forest. She saw the wilderness gradually melt away by the sturdy blows of the faithful men who sought to establish their homes in the new land, an achievement scarcely possible had it not been for the encouragement and sacrifices of the brave wives and loyal children. And so in her youth Emily Louisa May laid the solid foundation of a noble womanhood, and built a character of integrity, faithfulness and Christian principle that endured to the end, and endeared her to the hearts of the people of a large community."

By the middle of the century, Isaac May was becoming somewhat of a magnet in drawing others of the May family in New York to resettle around his property in Ohio. His younger brother, Joab, followed. His widowed sister, Roxana (May) Griggs, followed. Eventually his brother, Hiram, although an elderly and widowed man at the time, came to Sandusky County to live out the remaining days of his life. How many others -- nephews, cousins -- were attracted to Ohio because of Isaac? The question is difficult to answer.

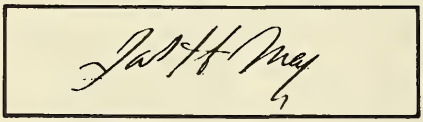
Isaac May died on December 8, 1874. The number of descendants he left was adequate to assure his funeral would be a well-attended event. Following the service his body was buried in Ellsworth Cemetery, alongside the graves of several

of his children.

When the country preacher's will was read, it was found to be a simple statement which assured fairness to all. It said only (punctuation added):

> "In the name of the Benevolent Father of all, I, Isaac May of Townsend, Sandusky County, Ohio, do make and publish the following as my last will and testament, hereby revoking and making void all former wills by me at any time made:
>
> "Item first -- I given and devise unto my son, Theron R. May, the South East quarter of the North West quarter of section thirty-two (32) Townsend Township, Sandusky County, Ohio, Forty acres of land.
>
> "Item second -- And as to all the residue of my Estate, both real and personal, it is my will that the same be distributed according to the laws of the state of Ohio, the said Theron R. May having his share with all the rest of my children and heirs at law.
>
> "I hereby appoint my son, Theron R. May, executor of this, my last will and testament.
>
> "In witness whereof I hereunto set my hand and seal this 11th day of July, AD 1873
>
> (signed) Isaac May /S/"

Isaac's executor, Theron R. May, was his only son who still was living in Sandusky County at the time the will was drawn. And, although his father left to him a forty-acre farm, Theron also was restless about remaining in Ohio.



The eldest son, James H. May, and Olive W. George were married in Sandusky County on July 20, 1853. They began their married life on a farm in Townsend Township near Isaac's home. Olive gave birth to two children there -- Louise in 1855 and William in 1858. But James considered Michigan to be attractive. He disposed of his Ohio land and purchased a farm in Fairfield Township of Lenawee County, where he and his family were living in 1870.

Eight of Isaac's twelve daughters were alive when he died. One of them -- Mary Ann -- had married William S. G. Mason on July 6, 1845, and they had moved to Lenawee County in 1857. Another -- Emeline M., who was called "Emma" -- married Charles Allen Elliott in Sandusky Coun-

ty on September 12, 1874. In 1880 they moved to Jackson County, Kansas. The youngest daughter -- Ida M. -- married Simon Kidman. In 1883 they moved to Michigan.

Four married daughters continued to live in Sandusky County after Isaac's death. They were Diantha, wife of Franklin Richards; Emily Louisa, who wed Lucius Stone and, after his death, married Paul Tew; Rosetta, who was the wife of William King; and Laura Maria, who married Joseph Vine.

The widow Nancy May relinquished whatever legal claim she might have had on the farm when, on March 29, 1876, she signed a quit claim deed to Theron for the consideration of $1. On the same day, Theron sold the farm for $2,400 to his cousin, Charles E. May, who had come to Sandusky County from his home in Livingston County, New York, after the Civil War.

Theron then went to Michigan where he acquired a farm in Lenawee County. His unmarried sister, Marilla, went with him. In 1893 she married John Kidman, brother of Simon.

In April, 1883, the widow Nancy May made a parting visit in Clyde, Ohio, to the home of her only surviving sister, Sybil Russell. Then she left for Kansas to stay awhile with daughter "Emma" Elliott, at the Elliotts' new home in Pleasant Grove. Nancy was taken ill. She died on March 12, 1884, at age 73. She was buried in Kansas.

From what is known, it is not difficult to envision Elder Isaac May as having been a moralistic, inexorable disciplinarian, a frugal preacher who looked upon himself -- and was looked upon -- as a near-sovereign spokesman for the May family. Obviously he expected a full share of farm labor from each of his children. In this way did he unknowingly become a factor in the early deaths of William, Saphronia and Cynthia? Or was work good for them? Vital records do not show the cause of their deaths.

Of Isaac's children who achieved some degree of prominence in Sandusky County, probably none was more widely known and highly respected than Diantha.

Diantha, on July 1, 1838, married Franklin Richards, one of twelve children of Silas and Mary (Rogers) Richards of Waterford, Connecticut. Franklin was born in Connecticut's New London County on February 24, 1809. In 1834 Franklin and his brother, Archibald, came to Sandusky County and commenced improving a farm they had bought previously. The two young, unmarried men worked for a cousin, Lester Richards, for their board. In 1835 they built a log cabin, intended to become their bachelors' hall. However, it was soon consumed in a

fire, which also destroyed a considerable sum of money they had saved. They replaced the cabin with a shanty in which they lived, doing their own housework, until they could build a better home. In 1837 Archibald married and started a home of his own. Franklin lived alone, then, until he and Diantha May were married.

Despite the hardships and perplexities of pioneer life in Ohio, Franklin and Diantha worked diligently, saved carefully, and ultimately achieved the success of owning a good farm, a fine home and lived comfortably with their large family. They were the parents of twelve children.

VISITING ISAAC MAY'S GRAVE

Glendon E. May of Fremont, Ohio, kneels on the sod at the grave of the Rev. Isaac May. The preacher was Glendon's great-great-grandfather and Glendon Still lives within a few miles of the Sandusky County farm which Pastor Isaac worked for many years.

FAMILY OF ISAAC MAY

(Three Generations)

ISAAC MAY, b. Strafford, Vt., Oct. 5, 1796; m. (1) Rachel S. McMillen, Livingston Co., N. Y., ca. 1816; m. (2) Nancy McMillen, Sandusky Co., Ohio, Jan. 13, 1830; Rachel b. Grafton Co., N. H., Jan. 5, 1797; d. Sandusky Co., Nov. 13, 1829. Nancy b. Grafton Co., Sep. 11, 1810; d. Pleasant Grove, Kan., Mar. 12, 1884. He d. Sandusky Co., Dec. 8, 1874. Seventeen children, seven by Rachel, ten by Nancy.

1. Unnamed boy, d. in infancy, Livingston Co., N. Y.

2. EMILY, b. Livingston Co., d. in childhood.

3. DIANTHA, b. Livingston, Oct. 10, 1819; m. Franklin Richards, July 1, 1838; d. Sandusky Co., Ohio, May 8, 1879; he d. 1889.
   Children, all b. Sandusky Co., Ohio
   - i. SIMON G., b. July 12, 1839; d. Civil War prison, Dec. 2, 1863.
   - ii. SILAS L., b. Dec. 10, 1840; m. Josie Kennedy; d. 1893.
   - iii. THERON R., b. Nov. 8, 1842; d. Nov. 30, 1842.
   - iv. CHARLES M., b. Feb. 28, 1844; m. (1) Phoebe E. Rhodes; (2) Florence Kellogg.
   - v. JAMES P., b. Feb. 20, 1846; m. (1) Rachel E. Harvey; (2) Alice Straight; d. Jackson Co., Kan.
   - vi. JOSEPH D., b. Feb. 16, 1848; d. Mar. 26, 1848.
   - vii. FRANCES S., b. May 31, 1849; m. Charles E. May; d. Sandusky, Feb. 21, 1936.
   - viii. MILO S., b. Aug. 1, 1852; d. Aug. 24, 1852.
   - ix. WILLIAM A., b. Sep. 4, 1853; d. June 4, 1870.
   - x. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, b. June 20, 1855; d. Apr. 18, 1866.
   - xi. MARY C., b. Sep. 30, 1857; d. Dec. 20, 1866.
   - xii. IMOGENE D., b. Aug. 8, 1861; m. Ekin Kidman; d. Lenawee Co., Mich., Feb. 24, 1925.

4. EMILY LOUISA, b. Livingston, Mar. 29, 1822; m. (1) Lucius Stone, 1840; (2) Paul Tew, 1871; d. Sandusky, Mar. 17, 1896.
   Children (prob. incomplete). all b. Sandusky (by Stone)
   - i. WESLEY, b. 1841.
   - ii. ANITA, b. 1842.
   - iii. EDWIN, b. 1844.
   - iv. CLARINDA, b. 1849.

5. JAMES H., b. Sandusky, 1823; m. Olive W. George; d. Lenawee Co., Mich., Nov. 14, 1913.
   Children (prob. incomplete)
   - i. LOIS, b. 1855.
   - ii. WILLIAM, b. 1858.

6. MARY ANN, b. Sandusky, Jan. 24, 1825; m. William S. G. Mason, July 6, 1845; d. Morenci, Mich., Mar. 15, 1915.
   Children, all b. Sandusky
   - i. ANGELETTA R., b. Aug. 8, 1846; m. Alfred Abbott; d. Morenci, 1925.
   - ii. ANNA M., b. Aug. 13, 1848; m. Charles Leonard; d. Manton, Mich.
   - iii. ALICE P., b. July 25, 1850; m. George W. Woodworth; d. Lenawee Co., Mich., July 28, 1903.
   - iv. WINFIELD SCOTT, b. July 27, 1852; m. Abigail Densmore; d. Chicago.
   - v. WILLIAM FRANK, b. Aug. 15, 1856; m. Ella Abbott; d. Waukegan, Ill.

Continued

7. WILLIAM, b. Sandusky, Mar. 1, 1828/29; d. Sandusky, Mar. 10, 1858

8. SAPHRONIA, b. Sandusky, 1832; d. 1849.

9. CYNTHIA, b. Sandusky, Sep. 1, 1833; m. (1) Decatur D. May: (2) Levant May; d. Sandusky, Sep. 29, 1859.
Children (by Decatur), b. Sandusky
i. MARY E., b. 1852; m. John G. Wiley.
ii. ALBERT D., b. 1854.
iii. LILLIAS C., b. 1855; m. George Miller.

10. ROSETTA, b. Sandusky, 1837; m. William King.
Children (not complete)
i. SARAH, m. Neil Miller.

11. HIRAM, b. Sandusky, Feb. 1841; d. Civil War, Lexington, Ky., Nov. 11,1862.

12. LAURA ANN, b. Sandusky; d. Sandusky, as child.

13. LAURA MARIA, b. Sandusky, 1844; m. Joseph Vine.
Children, all b. Sandusky (may be incomplete)
i. PETER, b. 1857.
ii. JAMES, b. 1860.
iii. CHRISTOPHER, b. 1862.
iv. EDITH, b. 1867.
v. EUGENE, b. 1870.

14. MARILLA, b. Sandusky, June 17, 1847; m. John Kidman, 1893; d. Mar. 1926.

15. EMELINE, b. Sandusky, July 16, 1849; m. Charles Allen Elliott, Sep. 12, 1874; d. Seneca, Kan., June 25, 1931.
Children, b. Lenawee Co., Mich.
i. CLYDE ALLEN, b. 1875; d. 1875.
ii. ALMYRA WINIFRED, b. Nov. 10, 1876; m. P. A. Jermane; d. Seneca, Kan., Oct. 27, 1912.

16. THERON R., b. Sandusky, 1851; m. G. Mae _____ ; d. Lenawee. Mich., 1926.

17. IDA M., b. Sandusky, Oct. 1, 1853: m. Simon Kidman, Mar. 31, 1876; d. Lenawee, Mich., May 28, 1925.
Children, b. Sandusky
i. ROYAL DURWOOD, b. Dec. 9, 1877; m. Mary Alice Smith; d. May 22,1942.
ii. LEON E., b. Sep. 29, 1885; m. Winifred E. Howland; d. Sep. 8, 1954.
iii. CARL M., b. Aug. 15, 1889; m. (1) Stella E. Older, (2) Mabel Kaiser: d. Nov. 6, 1972.
iv. LORENA M., b. Aug. 30, 1893; m. James Andrew Powell; d. May 28,1976.

Hiram May

25

Hiram Progressive as Conesus Farmer

HIRAM MAY, second of the sons born in Vermont to Harvey and Joanna, chose to remain in western New York through the productive years of his life. He was a farmer whose mind was open to progressive technology in agriculture when America was entering the age of machinery.

He was 6 when the May family emigrated from the Green Mountain State to resettle in Genesee Country. He was only 13 when he was credited with being the "first settler" on Lot 37, a tract containing 190.04 acres of Conesus land.

The records say the clearing of this land was started in 1811. It is doubtful that Hiram was ever truly a "settler" on the lot and in doing the clearing he must have received considerable assistance. Perhaps it was an investment in which both Hiram and his father shared the rewards. Lot 37 was later acquired by Elisha Hollister, who built the first log house on it in 1815.

Hiram was reared in an atmosphere and at a time in which there was plenty of work -- hard work -- for every able-bodied man or boy in the family. Without question, Hiram was well prepared to operate a farm by the time he was old enough to seek a wife.

The wife he sought, and won, was Eliza Morris, daughter of the Rev. Sylvester Morris and his wife Elizabeth. Hiram and Eliza, 15, were wed in 1819.

The Morrises were among the early settlers of Conesus and their home was a short distance from May's Corners. The May and Morris families were friends and neighbors with Mr. Morris being the hamlet's spiritual leader when he was pastor of the Christians, the society organized in 1818.

One of the minister's sons, Sylvester Morris, Jr., was

born in 1801 in Parish, New York, which apparently was also the birthplace of Eliza, born in 1804. The junior Sylvester Morris was ordained a minister in 1847 by the Central New York Christian Conference. He and his wife, the former Polly Alger, lived in Conesus most of their lives. Polly was a daughter of Captain John Alger of the Strafford militia in which Hezekiah May served. Alger and his wife, Elizabeth, moved to Conesus about 1808 when their son, Davenport, purchased the 149-acre lot and dwelling of Joseph Richardson near May's Corners.

* * *

Hiram and Eliza settled on a farm situated near that of his father.

Eliza gave birth to their first child, George, on July 6, 1820. The boy died on March 26 of the following year. He was buried in the Conesus Cemetery where a small, brown headstone marks the grave.

Eliza bore eight more children -- five sons and three daughters. One of the boys, like George, lived less than a year. He was Dennis M. May, born September 23, 1835; died June 1, 1836.

The eldest daughter was Maria who never married and was dead at age 23. Born in 1824, she died on October 10, 1847. Her grave also is in the Conesus Cemetery.

Less than two years after Maria's death, Eliza May died on June 24, 1849, leaving Hiram with six children still at home, but three of them having attained adulthood. The three youngest were Elizabeth, 15, James, 12, and Charles, 9. The eldest daughter then was Delilah, 21, and it may be assumed that she, with assistance from Elizabeth, took over the work of their mother. The elder sons were Darius, 23, and Thomas Jefferson, 16.

Two of Hiram's sons fought in the Civil War. One did not return. He was James who died in the conflict on March 6, 1863, just days after his 26th birthday. The youngest son, Charles E. May, was not yet 20 when the War Between the States broke out on April 12, 1861. He enlisted, saw much action, but returned safely at the war's conclusion.

Hiram May is recorded as being the first farmer in Conesus to own a "Douglas Machine," a newly invented horse-drawn article of farm equipment for threshing grain.

Boyd in his Conesus history says of it:

"This machine was constructed by raising two large posts, with a heavy beam from one to the other, in

form of a bent. From this bent there was a shaft ran down, with a wheel on top, and a hole through the same in which was inserted a sweep, and a horse was hitched to this, so as he could travel between the posts, and turn the shaft and wheel. From the wheel, there ran a belt or rope to an open cylinder, which they passed the grain through, doing the separation by hand."

When the Civil War came to its end, the surviving children of Hiram were -- or soon were to be -- married and rearing their own families.

Darius H. May, the eldest son, married Charlotte E. Shaffer in 1852 and was becoming a prominent and prosperous Livingston County farmer.

Thomas Jefferson May married Elizabeth E. Straight and they became the parents of five children, all born in Livingston County. After the children were born, however, Thomas and his wife moved from New York to Ohio. Ending a relatively brief residence in Ohio they moved to Kansas where Thomas died in 1922 and Elizabeth died in 1932.

Elizabeth May married Erastus Knowles in Livingston County and they continued living in the county for a few years. Hiram, when he gave up farming because of age, lived with Elizabeth for a short time.

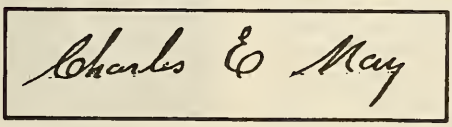
* * *

While Isaac May will be remembered in history as a stern, dedicated Baptist preacher in Ohio's Sandusky County, it was his nephew, Hiram's son, Charles E. May, who put together what may have been looked upon as a small "kingdom" in Townsend Township.

Charles came to Ohio at the conclusion of the Civil War and soon thereafter, on March 1, 1870, married Uncle Isaac's granddaughter, Frances S. Richards.

When he first arrived in Ohio Charles took work as a farm hand and as a laborer in oil fields. He settled in Townsend Township in 1870, acquiring fifty acres of his own and managing his wife's property -- forty acres which she inherited from her father, Franklin Richards.

Charles was a shrewd businessman who recognized the value of land when many others did not. He was a frequent buyer and seller. Sandusky County land records list many transactions in which Charles is named as grantor or grantee. In 1881 he purchased eighty acres in Section 29 for $225,



paid to Isaac's daughter Laura and her husband, Joseph H. Vine. Later that year he bought eighty acres in Section 29 for $100, paid to George King, Delphenia and Nelson Bonner, and Sarah and Cornelius Miller. In 1882 he bought eighty acres in Section 29 from his brother-in-law, James P. Richards, and wife, Alice, who had left Ohio to resettle in Jackson County, Kansas. The quit claim deed mentions only the sum of $75. In 1883 he bought ten acres from Isaac's daughter Ida and her husband, Simon Kidman, who were emigrating to Michigan. In 1886 he was grantee in a quit claim deed by which Fred King transferred to him eighty acres of land, the mentioned sum being $33.33.

In addition to his farming and stock-raising interests, Charles for more than thirty years operated a sawmill and a sorghum and cider mill. The May family was then so prominent that the area in which they lived became known as Mayville. The mills burned in 1902.

While Charles was becoming a man of stature in Mayville, Hiram May was finding -- with his family dispersed -- that Conesus was no longer the home for him that it had been. He agreed to come to Ohio and live with Charles.

On July 28, 1883, Hiram died. He was buried alongside Isaac in the Ellsworth Cemetery. A tablet of white stone marks his grave. The epitaph says:

HIRAM MAY
Born
Strafford, Orange Co., Vt.
June 1798
Died
Townsend, Sandusky Co., O.
July 1883

* * *

Title to some of the land acquired by Charles E. May still remains in the May name. Clayton E. May cultivates land that once was the farm of his great-great-grandfather, Isaac. Glendon E. May and his son, Richard, own farm land in the same area, near the town of Fremont.

Glendon and Clayton, brothers, are descendants of both Isaac and Hiram, brothers. That is because, as related earlier, their grandfather, Charles E. May, a son of Hiram, was the husband of Frances S. Richards, a granddaughter of Isaac. Their father was Ralph E. May who was born and died in Townsend Township of Sandusky County.

CLAYTON

Among Hiram May's descendants were many who were very successful in their professions or otherwise regarded as creditable members of the family. It is, of course, a difficult task -- and done only with an unavoidable amount of unfairness -- to select a few from many for specific mention.

Ada Elizabeth May, a great-granddaughter of Hiram, daughter of Ross E. and Ina (Dawson) May, born in Kansas, was the First Lady of Nebraska from 1955 to 1959 after her husband, Victor E. Anderson, was elected governor. He died in 1962.

Elwood Krisher, son of Eugene and Ella (May) Krisher, was a fighter pilot who lost his life in South Pacific combat in World War II.

Charles G. May, a grandson of Darius and the son of Herman L. and Mabel May of Livonia, New York, was a teacher who achieved considerable recognition. In the early years of his career he taught science and was athletics coach. For thirty years prior to his retirement in 1971 he was a district superintendent of schools in the New York State Association and served on its Executive Committee. A new building at Mount Morris in 1969 was named the Charles G. May Occupational Center "in honor of the man who has devoted a lifetime to education in New York State." He also was active in civic and political affairs in Livonia where he served as mayor for nine years.

Charles G. May

FAMILY OF HIRAM MAY

(Three Generations)

HIRAM MAY, b. Strafford, Vt., June 20, 1798; m. Eliza Morris, Conesus, N. Y., ca. 1819; d. Townsend Twp., Sandusky Co., Ohio, July 28, 1883; Eliza b. 1804; d. Conesus, June 24, 1849. Nine children, all b. Livingston Co., N. Y.

1. GEORGE, b. July 6, 1820; d. Mar. 26, 1821.

2. MARIA, b. July, 1824; d. Conesus, Oct. 10, 1847.

3. DARIUS H., b. 1826; m. Charlotte Shafer, ca. 1852; d. Conesus, May 22, 1890; Charlotte b. 1834, d. 1914.

   Children, all b. Livingston Co., N. Y.

   i. WILLIAM E., b. July 20, 1853; m. Jeanette Allen; d. Conesus, Jan. 2, 1930.
   ii. EMMA S. (twin), b. 1856; m. Alex Green; d. 1942.
   iii. ELLA (twin), b. 1856; m. William Trescott; d. May 28, 1878.
   iv. FRANCES AMANDA, b. Aug. 3, 1858; m. William Henry Case; d. Rochester, N. Y., Nov. 23, 1931.
   v. HERMAN L., b. 1867; m. Mabel Goodno; d. Livingston Co., 1958.
   vi. MINNIE S., b. 1876; m. Douglas Odell; d. Livingston Co., 1954.

4. DELILAH, b. 1828. (No additional information).

5. THOMAS JEFFERSON, b. 1833; m. Elizabeth E. Straight, ca. 1866; d. Holton, Kan., Aug. 30, 1922. Elizabeth b. Wayne Co., N. Y., July 27, 1844; d. Topeka, Kan., Dec. 19, 1932.

   Children, all b. Livingston Co., N. Y.

   i. CHARLES JEFFERSON, b. Dec. 20, 1866; m. Stella Ash.
   ii. JENNIE ELIZABETH, b. May 11, 1869; m. Eugene Vine; d. Holton, Kan., Feb. 10, 1938.
   iii. WILMOT EUGENE, b. Mar. 7, 1871; m. Mary Teresa Coffman; d. Topeka, Kan., Sep. 16, 1946.
   iv. FREDERICK STRAIGHT, b. June 23, 1873; m. Mary Ann (Mae) Lawrence; d. Topeka, Kan., Sep. 15, 1942.
   v. ROSS EDELBERT, b. Aug. 14, 1878; m. Ina Dawson; d. Lincoln, Neb., July 31, 1946.

6. ELIZABETH, b. 1834; m. Erastus Knowles.

   Children, b. Livingston Co., N. Y.

   i. JAMES.
   ii. CHARLES.
   (Prob. incomplete).

7. DENNIS M., b. Sept. 23, 1835; d. June 1, 1836.

8. JAMES, b. Feb., 1837; d. Civil War, Mar. 6, 1863.

9. CHARLES E., b. June 13, 1840; m. Frances S. Richards, Mar. 1, 1870; d. Sandusky Co., Ohio, May 13, 1904. Frances b. Sandusky Co., May 31, 1849; d. Sandusky Co., Feb. 21, 1936.

   Children, all b. Sandusky Co., Ohio

   i. JAMES HERBERT, b. May 26, 1871; m. Carrie Linkenbach; d. Cleveland, Ohio, Aug., 1955.
   ii. RALPH ELBERT, b. Aug. 18, 1877; m. Alma Gertrude Jones; d. Sandusky Co., May 22, 1954.
   iii. BLANCHE E., b. Apr. 20, 1889; d. Sandusky Co., Apr. 1, 1926.

Joab May

26

Joab Takes Family to Ohio, Michigan

JOAB Y. MAY was a boy of age 5 when Harvey May took his family from Vermont to Conesus, New York, where they would carve out of the wilderness a new home and farm.

Joab was 6 when his father built his first log house on the lot he was improving. Presumably, Joab helped; even the hands of a small boy could be useful under the conditions of pioneer life in western New York as they existed in 1806.

Not only was Joab a useful hand at 6, he also had attained a position in the family which permitted him to eat at the table with the elders. It was customary in the log homes of the settlers for the small children to eat from a bowl, sitting on the floor.

There was little opportunity for Joab to obtain any kind of education, compared to the situation "back east." The pioneers were aware of the necessity of a school but a number of years passed before the first settlers of Conesus were able to establish one. The first school was situated in an orchard, north of the home of John D. Alger. It was a small schoolhouse, built of logs, ready for pupils in the winter of 1810. Polly Howe was the teacher.

There are no records to prove that Joab May attended the school, but he did learn to read and in later years became an avid reader of the Bible.

The first organization of the various schools in Conesus came in 1820. The schoolhouse of District No. 1 was situated close to May's Corners. It was organized by James King, Andrew Arnold and Benjamin C. Whitney on March 19, 1823.

Life was hard in the early years at Conesus and there was much to discourage the first settlers. Often the crops were a failure. Often they were destroyed by deer which roamed the woodlands in abundance.

In 1805, the year in which Harvey May brought his family to Conesus, settlers did most of their trading at Dansville, about ten miles from Conesus. The supply of tea and coffee was tight, sales were limited to small quantity and the cost was high. Sugar and molasses were not available.

Crops were severely damaged in the summer of 1816 when a hard frost struck on July 13. Consequently, wheat and corn were hard to obtain, even at inflated prices. Potatoes went to a dollar a bushel, a high price. The scarcity of these commodities, and the high prices, caused much suffering for some settlers.

There was a scarcity of salt in 1820. Historian William P. Boyd wrote: "It took eight bushels of wheat to buy a barrel (of salt), and many of the poorer settlers suffered for it."

Despite the difficulties, Harvey May improved his land and prospered. Joab was reared -- with his eight brothers and sisters -- in an atmosphere of frugality and hard work. He soon learned that social life centered in being a good neighbor.

Among the neighbors of the Mays was the family of Salmon Griggs, a Massachusetts native who had married Philena Bolster and joined others in the westward trek from New England. For a time the Griggs family lived in Cortland County. Then, around 1805, Griggs moved into the adjoining county of Cayuga. Later he moved into Livingston County.

Salmon and Philena had a son, Salmon Griggs, Jr., who sought and won the hand of Roxana May. They were married on March 23, 1825, with Squire Stiles officiating.

Salmon and Philena also had a daughter, Mary, who was born in Cayuga County on April 27, 1806.

Joab courted Mary and they were married in 1827.

Joab and Mary started their lives together on a tract of land in Conesus Township in a settlement near the head of Conesus Lake. Their first child was born on June 22, 1828. It was a son and they named him Decatur D. May. On October 14, 1830, Mary gave birth to another boy. They named him Marvin L. May.

At about this time Joab was hearing reports concerning the fertile, low-priced land available in Ohio, where brother Isaac had settled in 1822. Consequently, the Livingston Register in its issue of November 6, 1833, contained an item as follows:

Important to farmers--First Rate Flat Land--

The subscriber, wishing to leave this and migrate to a more new country, has finally concluded to sell his valuable LOT of LAND containing 25 acres, formerly owned by (illegible name) and situated in the town of Conesus, near the head of Conesus Lake, and adjoining H. Gilbert's Tavern Stand. On said premises there is a good two story frame Dwelling House, frame barn and Horse shed. It is well watered and profitably located for most kinds of mechanical business. N.B. the Terms, will be such as cannot fail to suit those willing to purchase. Joab May, October 30, 1833, Conesus.

Joab sold his Conesus property. If, however, his intention had been to resettle in Ohio, he changed his mind. He bought a farm in Springwater Township of Livingston County, only a few miles south of where he and Mary had been living.

The location of the Springwater farm made Joab a close neighbor of his sister, Roxana, and her husband Salmon Griggs, Jr. Incidentally, Roxana was called "Roxsanney" so much and by so many that, in time, even her own family began to believe that Roxsanney was really her name.

Joab and Mary May added four children to their family while living in Springwater. Besides Decatur and Marvin, born in Conesus, the children were:

EMILY E. MAY	b.	Mar. 3, 1835
THEODORE HARRISON MAY		Aug. 6, 1840
HIRAM SYLVESTER MAY		Dec. 22, 1844
HARRIET C. MAY		Mar. 22, 1846

It is possible that one factor in Joab's decision to buy the farm neighboring that of Salmon was the fact that Salmon had developed a lung ailment. As it progressively worsened, his ability to do hard work declined. Joab and his eldest sons were able to lend a hand to the Griggs family.

Roxana had a large family, six sons and five daughters. All born in Springwater, these children were:

ANAH MATILDA GRIGGS	b.	Sep. 8, 1826
DANIEL S.		Sep. 9, 1828
ROXSANNEY		June 7, 1830
DECATUR D.		June 6, 1832
ORPHA MINERVA		July 15, 1836
DAVID S.		June 26, 1839
HARVEY W.		June 17, 1842

PRUDENCE A.	Sep. 21, 1845
EZRIE	Mar. 17, 1848
MIRAN	June 17, 1851
WILLIAM J.	Sep. 10, 1854

Ezrie and Miran Griggs died on the day they were born. Decatur D. Griggs, given the same name as Joab's first-born son, died at the age of 10 on September 14, 1842. The other eight children of Salmon and Roxana lived to marry and rear families of their own.

Soon after the birth of Harriet, Joab May again was studying the promises of an improved life if he would resettle his family in Ohio. His eldest brother, Isaac, the Free-Will Baptist elder, was urging him to make the change. Although his second-eldest brother, Hiram May, was contented to remain in Conesus, Joab decided to go westward.

Salmon Griggs was now seriously ill, but his eldest son, Daniel, was able to do the hard work, aided by his sisters and smaller brothers.

Salmon died on October 1, 1855.

* * *

On September 2, 1850, when the enumerator for the U. S. Census visited, Joab and Mary May were living on a 50-acre tract adjoining the farm of Isaac May in Townsend Township of Sandusky County, Ohio.

All of Joab's children were still living at home except Emily. A few months earlier, Emily E. May had married Arde Waring on April 20, 1850. She was 15. Arde was 33. The first of the Waring children, Theodore H. Waring, perhaps named after Emily's brother, Theodore Harrison May, was born in 1854.

Joab was 50 when the 1850 census was taken and the enumerator entered his name in the records as "Jacob." Mary now was 44, but the census sheet listed her as 45.

The first of Joab's sons to take a wife was Decatur. He married "the girl next door"; his bride was Cynthia May, his cousin, a daughter of Uncle Isaac. They were married in 1850.

(Chapter 27 will relate the tragic story of the lives of Cynthia and Decatur).

The second of Joab's sons to wed was Marvin L. May who married Electa Hurd in Sandusky County on April 10, 1853. Electa was 19. She had been born in Ohio, a child of parents who also were natives of Ohio.

Marvin obtained a farm in Sandusky County and the first three of the six children born to him by Electa were born at that farm. They were Adella M. May, Emma H. May and Alphas M. May.

When the U. S. Census enumerator called again, in 1860, he found Joab and Mary still working the farm tract adjoining the land of Isaac. In fact, Isaac may have owned that tract for there seems to be no record of Joab having bought or sold land in Sandusky County. Whether or not he owned it, the enumerator, making his stop at Joab's and Isaac's dwellings on June 28, listed Joab's real estate as valued at $3,500. His personal estate was set at $500. And, again, the census-taker had trouble with Joab's name; this time he was entered into the records as "Johab" May, age 60.

The 64-year-old Isaac May was listed by the enumerator as being a "Master Farmer." His real estate was given a value of $5,000 while his personal estate was entered at $800.

Only Theodore, 21, Hiram, 16, and Harriet, 14, continued to live with their parents when the 1860 census was taken.

WHERE JOAB MAY LIVED IN OHIO

Descendants of Isaac May, still farming land he owned in Ohio, say this old, unoccupied house on May land was the dwelling of Joab May before he moved to Michigan in 1863.

Less than five months after the census was taken, Joab and Isaac, and their eligible sons, were casting their votes in the presidential election of 1860 -- a contest which mainly was between Republican Abraham Lincoln and Democrat Stephen A. Douglas.

It is doubtful that either Joab or Isaac knew much about the candidates, but it seems they must have been aware that tension was increasing over the issue of slavery. Harriet Beecher Stowe's book, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," had intensified feeling against slavery in the decade of the '50s. Tension increased more when the U. S. Supreme Court ruled in 1857, by a 6-to-3 vote, that Dred Scott, a Negro, did not become free when taken to a free state and did not have rights as a citizen. Then John Brown's attempt to arm slaves at Harpers Ferry in 1859 further inflamed partisans.

Pledged to the gradual abolition of slavery, Lincoln won the election, getting 180 electoral votes to 12 for Douglas and 111 divided between John C. Breckinridge and John Bell who received 1,435,344 in the popular vote to 1,375,157 for Douglas. The popular vote for Lincoln was 1,866,352 -- or 39.9% of the total votes cast.

Lincoln's election led to the secession of South Carolina on December 20, followed by Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas which, early in 1861, formed the Confederate States of America.

The Civil War broke out on April 12, 1861, when Brig. Gen. P. T. G. Beauregard shelled Fort Sumter at Charleston, South Carolina.

The slavery issue -- and War Between the States -- now brought consternation into the homes of the three elder May brothers, Isaac's and Joab's in Ohio and Hiram's in New York. Being firmly dedicated Free-Will Baptists, the issue for them was a Biblical question: was the war, or any war, a righteous action? On the other hand, could they effectively resist the demands of Washington for men to serve in the Union army?

The war had made a distressing impact on the May family. Isaac's son, Hiram, was dead three months after he entered service. Two sons of Hiram, at Conesus, entered service and one, James, died in a prison camp. It had affected the life of Roxana, too.

Probably due to the insistence of Isaac, the widowed Roxana Griggs had sold her farm in Springwater and moved to Ohio in August, 1856. She had acquired a farm near that of Isaac and it was worked, mainly, by her son, Harvey. But Harvey, too, had enlisted. He served three years in the

23rd Ohio Regiment under Rutherford B. Hayes. When he was honorably discharged, he re-enlisted in the 8th U. S. Regiment in which he served for another year. Twice, Harvey Griggs was wounded in action.

At the war's end Harvey returned to Sandusky County where he and Mary E. Clinton were married on September 6, 1887.

They settled on a farm near Vickery and reared twelve children.

Of Roxana's other children: Anah Matilda married Joseph Cleveland; she died in Sandusky County on June 1, 1897. Daniel S. Griggs married (1) Rosetta George and (2) Mary (Arnold) Shurtz. Roxsanney married Lewis N. King; she died in Vickery, Ohio, on April 22, 1900. Orpha Minerva married Salmon King in 1857; she died on February 26, 1876; Prudence married Isaac W. Smith. William J. Griggs married Mary L. Bickley.

Roxana Griggs died in Sandusky County on March 4, 1892, a month before she would have reached age 82.

Joab May, it appears, was more adamant than his brothers about the Civil War. Whether by his wish, or of their own choosing, none of his sons volunteered and none was caught up in the draft. This may have been due, in part, to the fact that Joab kept his family on the move.

It seems that the war was a significant factor in Joab's decision to leave Ohio and resettle in Michigan in 1863 . . . the year of the carnage that was Gettysburg, a three-day battle that claimed 51,112 lives but halted Gen. Robert E. Lee's second invasion of the North and turned the tide of the war.

It was recalled by Joab's youngest son, Hiram S. May, many years later, that in the darkest days of the war the Union government made conscription unpalatable to laboring people by allowing those who could afford it to buy their way out of the draft for $300.

So, after about fifteen years of farming in Sandusky County, Joab was interested in "moving west" -- although the distance was less than a hundred miles. Michigan was relatively new as a state; it had come into the Union in 1837 whereas Ohio had become a state in 1803.

Joab assembled the possessions he would carry with him and the family set out for the place which was Joab's selection -- Lenawee County, one of Michigan's southern tier of counties and just north of the Ohio line.

On May 13, 1863, Joab paid the sum of $3,400 for two tracts of line in Medina Township, near the town of Morenci. He bought the land from James and Julia E. Heath. The deed

(Lenawee Liber 64, Page 333) describes the property:

> **The East half of the Southwest quarter of Section Seventeen (17) and the South East quarter of the North West quarter of Section Twenty (20) except two (2) and ninety nine one hundred and sixtieths (99/160) acres off of the south end of the last mentioned description the said excepted parcel of Land Being Seven (7) rods and one foot wide outtereast end and three (3) rods and seven feet wide outterwest end in town eight (8) south of Range one (1) East Containing one hundred and twenty acres of Land be the same more or Less To have and to hold the Same with the appurtenances unto the said Joab May his heirs and assigns forever . . .**

If he could keep them from being drafted, Joab now had Theodore, 22, and Hiram, 18, to share the farm work. He succeeded in this. None of Joab's sons entered the war.

Joab proved to be a magnet to others in the May family concerning the attractiveness of "Micigama" -- the Indian word for the land of "large water."

Marvin, Joab's eldest son following the death of Decatur, also quit Ohio for Michigan. In addition, several of Joab's nephews followed.

Marvin and Electa pushed deeper into Michigan than Joab had done. They bought a farm in Clinton County, in the central part of the state, from Chauncey P. Jaguish in 1864.

Hiram S. May, whose story will be told subsequently in greater detail, married and brought his bride to Clinton County.

A year later, Theodore, the third brother, bought land in Clinton, also from Mr. Jaguish.

Marvin and Hiram found that in Clinton County, as in Lenawee, the Civil War still was foremost in the minds of most residents.

The weekly Clinton County Republican had campaigned hard in 1864 for the re-election of President Lincoln. Unlike most newspapers of later generations , the Republican was virtually a mouthpiece for the Union party of the President. The November election, however, showed that Lincoln was not as well supported by Clinton residents as he was by the editor. The President won the county by 113 votes. The count was: President Lincoln, 1,524; Gen. George B. McClellan, the Democratic candidate, 1,411. Nationally, Lincoln did better than he did against divided opposition in the 1860 election, receiving a popular vote of 2,216,067 to McClellan's 1,808,-725.

Reporting that Lincoln had won the county -- and carried

Michigan by 15,000 votes -- the Clinton Republican expressed its feelings in the headlines:

"Copperheadism Squelched!"

The Elections!

The Country Safe!

Lincoln Re-Elected!

No Compromise With Traitors!

On the following April 14 President Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth and he died the following morning. Only days before the assassin struck Gen. Ulysses S. Grant had accepted the surrender of Gen. Robert E. Lee.

On April 24, nine days after Lincoln's death, Joab May "of Medina, Lenawee Co." paid $3,300 to William and Caroline Heck for a farm in Bingham Township of Clinton County. The deed described the property as being:

> **The North half of the North west Quarter of Section Nine in Town Seven North of Range two west, except two acres off the North West corner lying 32 rods East and West by ten rods North and South — Also the South twenty acres off the South West Quarter of the South West Quarter of Section Twenty in Town Eight North of Range two west both descriptions being in the State of Michigan and containing Ninety Eight acres more or less, reserving the use of the North house on the first description and strip of land before it to the highway about two rods wide till October 1st 1865, And the South house thereon for 15 days.**

Over the next few years things seemed to be going well for the May family. Joab and each of his three sons were working farms in Clinton County and the outlook for them was as good as it appeared to be for anyone depending on agriculture for their livelihood.

A new problem was developing, however, for Joab. Mary was failing in health. Her condition continued to worsen. Then, on January 7, 1869, she died. She was 63. The cause of her death, said her physician on the death certificate, was "liver complaint."

Mary, it may be presumed, was buried in Clinton County. The site of her grave, however, is not to be found. There is no gravestone and cemetery records for interments at the time are incomplete.

Had Mary May lived through that year -- 1869 -- she could have greeted three additional grandchildren into her family. All were born at St. Johns.

Theodore May had married Melinda A. Smith, a sister of Hiram's wife, Maria Jane, both reared mainly in Lenawee County. (More about the Smith family subsequently). Melinda gave birth to Theodore's first child, Ella Sarah May, on September 2, 1869.

Electa, Marvin's wife, gave birth to twin boys on August 1, 1869. They named the boys Ervin and Erwin, yet, oddly, always called them "Joe" and "Jim." They were the fourth and fifth of children born to Marvin and Electa.

Meanwhile, Hiram, (whose story will follow), had become the father of three with a fourth to be born in the spring of 1870.

That year of 1869 -- whether or not the death of Joab's wife had anything to do with it -- saw a considerable amount of land trading, selling, buying among all of the May family members in Clinton County. Much of it, a century later, appears so complicated that it is difficult to reconstruct the motives.

In December, 1869, Joab and Melinda (Theodore's wife) sold land to Electa (Marvin's wife).

Then, on December 16, Marvin paid $1,500 to James C. and Diantha Bates for a tract containing forty acres in Rome Township of Lenawee County, described in the deed as being the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of section No. 20 in Town Six, Range Two. Buildings were included.

So Marvin and his family left Clinton, returning to Lenawee.

In March of 1870 Theodore sold Clinton County land to his father. In May of the same year, Joab sold land to Theodore. Then in November, Joab sold a one-acre tract to Hiram. In June of the following year, 1871, Joab sold his major holding in Clinton to Hiram Nestell. From that time on, it appears, Joab lived with Theodore and Melinda.

Within a couple of years all of the family had left Clinton County. For a brief time, around 1876, Theodore was living at Chapin, on the Saginaw-Shiawassee county line. Then he returned to Lenawee County, to a farm in Rome Township.

While the May brothers were moving often in the '70s and '80s, it seems they continued to follow the leader, whoever he might be, and remain close together as a family.

On January 20, 1879, Marvin bought an 80-acre farm in Branch County, for which he paid $2,500 to Robert E. Copeland and wife, Maria. It was described as "The East half of the North East quarter of Section twenty one (21), in Town Six (6) South of Range eight (8) West . . . excepting & reserving one acre in the N. E. part, used for a Town House."

Theodore, his father with him, followed. On December 2, 1879, Theodore paid $6,400 to C. D. Randall and his wife, Alice, of Coldwater, for a farm of 123 acres, described as "The East half of the North East quarter of Section fourteen in Town seven South of Range eight West, in Branch County, Michigan, excepting one and 32/160 acres sold to C. R. Garrison, and one acre sold to Babcock & Corey. Also the East half of the South East quarter of Section eleven, excepting that part which lies East of Walker Street and North of Stat State Street, and also excepting lots 143, 50, 51, 57, 58, 62, 63, 70, 71, 72, 73, and 80, of S. C. Rose's Addition to the Village of Bronson, all being in said Town, and containing in all about one hundred & twenty three acres of land."

Hiram followed Marvin and Theodore to Branch county.

Meanwhile, another son had been born to Marvin and Electa just prior to their leaving Lenawee County. He was named Loren.

When the U. S. Census of 1880 was taken, the count in the village of Bronson, where Theodore's home was located, was made on June 23. Theodore and Melinda now were the parents of three children: Ella S., 10; Loren A., 6; and Jennie Lind, 4. Listed as a member of the household was Joab, 80, with "no" occupation.

What was Joab like, as a person? "Old Joab was a good farmer," said an 82-year-old grandson, many years after Joab was gone. "He produced some of the finest apples grown in Lenawee County and he had to chase off children who tried to steal them."

"He was short and a little stout," said an 80-year-old granddaughter. "He was a disciplinarian."

All who remembered him said he was an avid reader of the Bible who could quote much Holy Scripture from memory.

In the winter of 1881-82 the May family started an exodus from Branch County. Both Marvin and Theodore acquired farms near the village of Chapin, northwest of the Central Michigan city of Owosso.

Theodore, who also for a time owned a hotel in St. Johns, purchased a small two-story business building in the village of Bannister, in Gratiot County, in 1884.

It was in the upstairs living quarters of this building that Joab died on Christmas Day of 1885. He was buried in what now is known as the "old cemetery" in the village of Elsie, a few miles south of Bannister. For almost a century his grave was unmarked, although its location was known by aged descendants. There now is a small white headstone at the site of burial.

Buried alongside Joab in the Elsie cemetery, their graves unmarked, were Marvin's wife, Electa, who died at about the same time as Joab, and Marvin himself, who died on February 16, 1920, in Ovid.

The structure in which Joab died, situated on the northeast corner of the intersection of the Ann Arbor Railroad's tracks and the main street of Bannister, was sold by Theodore and Melinda on January 8, 1886, to Lorenzo F. Randolph for $315. They gave their place of residence as Chapin.

Long-time residents of Bannister say the building was destroyed by fire about 1923.

After the death of Electa, Marvin in 1886 married Alma A. Holden. He had employed her, in the beginning, as a housekeeper and nurse, someone who would be able to provide care for Erwin (Jim) through a lasting illness. Alma was 16; Marvin was 53.

Alma gave Marvin a second family. She was the mother of five, all born in Shiawassee County. They were:

LILLIAN E.	b.	Sep. 24, 1890
ALGER JOAB		July 9, 1883
McKINLEY LUZELLA		Aug. 21, 1894
ALTA CAROLINE		Aug. 24, 1897
CARMON ELLEN		Nov. 15, 1904.

After Marvin died in Ovid on February 16, 1920, Alma, oddly, married Erwin, her stepson.

Alma died in Lakeview, Michigan, on June 6, 1945.

Theodore and Melinda May retired in a nice home in Ovid. He died there on September 30, 1923. She died on April 23, 1928. Their graves are in the Ovid cemetery.

FAMILY OF JOAB Y. MAY

(Three Generations)

JOAB Y. MAY, b. Strafford, Vt., Mar. 4, 1800; m. Mary Griggs, Conesus, N. Y., ca. 1827; d. Bannister, Mich., Dec. 25, 1885; she d. St. Johns, Mich., Jan. 7, 1869. Six children.

1. DECATUR D., b. Conesus, June 22, 1828; m. Cynthia May, Dec. 22, 1850; d. Sandusky Co., Ohio, 1855; she d. Sandusky Co., Sep. 29, 1859.

   Children b. Sandusky Co., Ohio

   i. MARY E., b. 1852; m. John G. Wiley.
   ii. ALBERT D., b. 1854.
   iii. LILLIAS C., b. 1855; m. George Miller.

2. MARVIN L., b. Conesus, Oct. 14, 1833; m. (1) Electa Hurd, Apr. 10, 1853; (2) Alma A. Holden, ca. 1889; d. Ovid, Mich., Feb. 16, 1920. Electa d. Michigan, ca. 1885; Alma d. Lakeview, Mich., June 6, 1945.

   Children by Electa

   i. ADELLA M., b. Sandusky Co., Ohio, 1854; m. Mont Depue; d. 1902.
   ii. EMMA H., b. Sandusky Co., 1855; m. George W. Smith; d. Michigan, May 1, 1921.
   iii. ALPHAS M., b. Sandusky Co., 1858; m. Lucy _____.
   iv. ERVIN (JOE), twin, b. Clinton Co., Mich., Aug. 1, 1869; m. Margaret French.
   v. ERWIN (JIM), twin, b. Clinton Co., Aug. 1, 1869; m. Alma A. (Holden) May.
   vi. LOREN, b. Clinton Co., 1877; m. Alice Sutliff; d. North Dakota.

   Children by Alma, b. Shiawassee Co., Mich.

   vii. LILLIAN E., b. Sep. 24, 1890; m. Frank McCullough; d. St. Johns, Mich., Feb. 19, 1958.
   viii. ALGER JOAB, b. July 9, 1893; m. (1) Lela West, (2) Zora Boyd; d. Denison, Texas, June 15, 1975.
   ix. McKINLEY LUZELLA, b. Aug. 21, 1894; m. (1) Clara Ellen Schroeder, (2) Gertrude E. Forrester; d. Ludington, Mich., Jan. 12, 1982.
   x. ALTA CAROLINE, b. Aug. 24, 1897; m. Guy Harris; d. Owosso, Mich., Dec. 25, 1971.
   xi. CARMON ELLEN, b. Nov. 15, 1904; m. Gerald F. Devereaux; d. Owosso, Mich., July 31, 1959.

3. EMILY E., b. Springwater, N. Y., Mar. 3, 1835; m. Arde Waring, Apr. 20, 1850.

   Children b. Sandusky Co., Ohio (may be incomplete)

   i. THEODORE H., b. 1854.
   ii. FREMONT, b. 1856.
   iii. JONATHAN, b. 1858.
   iv. ARDE, b. 1860.

Continued

4. THEODORE HARRISON, b. Springwater, N. Y., Aug. 6, 1840; m. Melinda A. Smith, ca. 1868; d. Ovid, Mich., Sep. 30, 1923; she d. Ovid, Apr. 23, 1928.

Children

i. ELLA SARAH, b. St. Johns, Mich., Sep. 2, 1869; m. Custer L. Waltz; d. Ovid, Oct. 3, 1942.
ii. LOREN A., b. Lenawee Co., Mich., Apr. 24, 1874; m. Elnore Ott; d. Owosso, Mich., May 28, 1946.
iii. JENNIE LIND, b. Chapin, Mich., July 20, 1876; m. John Henry Harris; d. Ovid, 1951.

5. HIRAM SYLVESTER, b. Springwater, N. Y., Dec. 22, 1844; m. Maria Jane Smith, 1864; d. Owosso, Mich., Jan. 13, 1925; she d. Owosso, Feb. 29, 1916.

Children b. Clinton Co., Mich.

i. SYLVESTER CHESTER, b. July 10, 1865; m. (1) Eliza Reed, (2) Caroline E. Bonnell; d. Muskegon, Mich., Mar. 15, 1957.
ii. HATTIE LYNN, b. Mar. 1, 1867; m. George Shaw; d. Owosso, Mich., Jan. 11, 1901.
iii. EUGENE ULYSSES, b. Dec. 26, 1868; m. Glennie D. Strickland; d. Lansing, Mich., Oct. 22, 1955.
iv. WILLIAM ALBERT, b. May 25, 1870; m. (1) Pearl M. Emmons, (2) Bertha Sweet, (3) Bertha L. Loucks; d. Owosso, Mich., Dec. 6, 1931.

6. HARRIET C., b. Springwater, N. Y., Mar. 22, 1846. Marriage (if) and date of death not found.

DECATUR D. MAY

27

Cynthia May-May-May's Pitiable Life in Ohio

FARM LIFE in ante-bellum Ohio was difficult. The strong and healthy survived and, if they were fortunate, prospered. Many of the frail and sickly died prematurely.

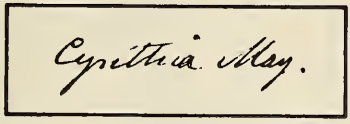
The story of Decatur D. May, Joab's eldest son, and his wife, Cynthia May, sixth daughter of Isaac, is filled with sorrowful events.

When the U. S. Census of 1850 was taken Cynthia was a 16-year-old girl, still attending school in the log building which the children reached by following a footpath through a wooded area.

A recent arrival in Townsend Township was Cynthia's cousin, Decatur.

Born in Conesus, New York, on June 22, 1828, Decatur was nearly five years older than Cynthia. She was born in Townsend on September 1, 1833.

Cynthia and Decatur fell in love. The fact that they were cousins was not important; a young lady or a suitor in rural Ohio at that time was not likely to have a large number of acquaintances.



On December 22, 1850, Cynthia and Decatur were married by Elder Marcus Mugg.

Decatur had worked hard, saved, and was able to start their lives together on a forty-acre farm in Townsend. He had simple tools with which to work, some of them antiquated. But he also had the guidance and assistance of his father and uncle, both well experienced in farming under adverse conditions.

At the outset, all went well. Decatur even managed to buy a yoke of oxen to do the heavy-duty work of improving his farm.

The first child born to Decatur and Cynthia was Mary E. May, who arrived in 1852. A son, Albert D. May, was born in 1854. Then a second daughter, Lillias C. May, came in 1855.

Decatur never got to know the little girl who would be called "Lillie"; in the spring of 1855 Decatur died. Vital records do not contain the date of his death, but it occurred between mid-April and mid-June. Also, the cause of his death is not now known.

What a blow this was to Cynthia! Not yet 22, she was a widow with three children, living on a farm where they had hogs, cattle, sheep and the oxen.

As Decatur died intestate, the Sandusky County Probate Court appointed Elder Isaac May to be administrator of the estate with Cynthia also named administratrix. Isaac pledged eight hundred dollars as administrator's bond on June 18, 1855.

It is somewhat possible to envision Decatur's farm from the inventory submitted to the court a month later by the three appointed appraisers. Their report said:

A true and accurate inventory of the goods and chattels of Decator D. May late of the Township of Townsend in the County of Sandusky, deceased, as presented to the undersigned Paul Tew, Joseph George and David Fuller, appraisers appointed by the Probate Court of said County by Isaac May administrator and Cynthia May administratrix of said estate, this 16th day of July 1855

1 Tou Horse Harness in part, & Chains	2.00
1 Log Chain	1.50
1 Cast Iron Mall	.38
1 Scythie & Snath	.50
1 Yoke of Oxen	85.00
1 Plough & Clevice	4.00
10 Yearling Cattle	50.00
1 Axe	.75
5 Cultivator Teeth	2.00
1 Cradle Scythe	.75
One clock	1.50
	146.88
Cash on hand	5.00
Cr. Joab May, account	8.00
" James H. May, "	3.50

Isaac May, note for the sum of one hundred and five dollars dated April 16, 1855, due January 1st, 1859	105.00
Interest on the same	1.57
Total amount	271.45

Given under our hands this day and year aforesaid

Paul Tew)
David Fuller)Appraisers
Joseph George sen)

Schedule of the goods and chattels belonging to the estate of Decator D. May, late of the Township of Townsend and County of Sandusky, deceased, to which the widow is entitled without being obliged to account for the same.

Wearing apparel of deceased
Also of the widow
1 Bed and beding
1 Chest
1 Trunk
1 Stove & furniture
1 Cow
7 Sheep
18 Lbs. Wool

Taken and returned by the subscribers, appraisers of the goods and chattels of said estate

Paul Tew)
David Fuller) Apraisers
Joseph George)

An additional report by the appraisers said:

A schedule of property set off by us the appraisers as aforesaid for the support of the widow and children one year from the death of the intestate estimated at one hundred and twenty five dollars and eighty seven cents

6	Acres of Grass on the ground	12.00
28	Bushels ears of Corn	8.37
2	Hogs	4.00
	Isaac May's Note for one hundred dollars dated April 16, 1855, due Jan. 1st, 1856	100.00
	Interest on said note	1.50
		$125.87

We further certify that the further sum of

seventy four dollars and thirteen cents (in all the sum of two hundred dollars) is necessary for that purpose.

Paul Tew)
David Fuller) Apraisers
Joseph George)

A public sale of Decatur's goods was held. The clerk of the sale reported:

A Bill of the property sold by Isaac May, Admr. and Cynthia May, admx. of the estate of Decatur May, Dec'd, at public vendue Septr. 12th 1855 --

Property Sold	To Whom sold	Price
Ten Head of young Cattle	Isaac Sparks 7 head at	$45.75
	James May 2 head at	14.00
	Wm. King, one at	6.25
One Yoke of Oxen	George Stull at	91.00
One Sett Cultvater teeth, one plow & Clvice, and a part sett of Harness and one Brass Clock	William King at	8.75
One Cast Mall and Grass Scythe	Isaac May at	.75
One Axe	Thompson Terry	1.18
One Cradle Scythe	Zopher Brush	.25
" Log Chain	George Stull	1.31
		$169.24

The above sale bill is correct
David Fuller) Clerk of
) sale

Six days later Isaac and Cynthia made oath on the inventory.

A year passed before Isaac, as administrator, was able to make his first report to the court. There was little left for Decatur's young widow and the children. The report listed assets of the estate at $292.31 and expenses at $220.35, leaving a balance of $71.96.

On January 15, 1859, Cynthia married again. The second husband also was a May -- Levant May. The marriage was performed by C. G. Sanford, justice of the peace.

Did Cynthia wed Levant out of love for him -- or because her circumstances as viewed by her father made it necessary for her to have a husband?

It is difficult — if not impossible — to determine the blood relationship of Cynthia and Levant. According to family legend Levant was an uncle of Decatur, but that would make him an uncle of Cynthia too. Such a marriage would have been illegal, but in Ohio in 1859 it could have happened. Little is known about Levant. Comparison of census records, however, shows it unlikely that Levant was Cynthia's uncle. It is much more likely he was another cousin who came to Ohio from New York to work as a farm hand.

Regardless of the second marriage, Sandusky County Probate Judge John Bell on February 28, 1859, ruled it necessary that a guardian be appointed for Cynthia's three children. On the same day James H. May, Cynthia's brother, was appointed guardian with Levant and David Fuller signing the guardian's bonds.

A bond in the case of each child required James May as principal and Levant May and Mr. Fuller be "held and firmly bound unto the State of Ohio in the penal sum of two hundred dollars." The condition of the bonds was that James H. May would perform the "duty of Guardian" for Mary E. May and Lillias C. May until they "arrive at the age of twelve years as the law requires" and for Albert D. May until he "arrive at the age of fourteen years as the law requires."

On April 13, James reported to the court that the real estate of Mary, Albert and Lillias was comprised of the forty acres of land in the southeast quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 32 in Townsend Township, valued at six hundred dollars and producing a yearly income of thirty dollars.

The last record of distribution of money to the children was dated February 5, 1875. By then Mary had become the wife of John Wiley and Lillias was the wife of George Miller.

The marriage of Cynthia and Levant was of short duration . . . as the drama of her life continued to unfold tragedy. On September 29, 1859, only eight months after she wed Levant, Cynthia died.

It is a strange story — this account of a Miss May who became Mrs. May, then the widow May, and then Mrs. May again! Apparently it also was confusing to the U. S. Census enumera-

tor when he visited the home of Elder Isaac May in 1860. He listed Cynthia as a member of the household although she had died in the previous year.

Cynthia was buried in Ellsworth Cemetery near the graves of her sister Saphronia and brothers William and Hiram.

A rectangular white gravestone was inscribed:

CYNTHIA
Wife of
LEVANT MAY
Daughter of
ISAAC MAY
Died
Sep. 29, 1859
Aged 26 Y. 28 D.

Even in death — as though the story of pitiable Cynthia was destined to continue into another century — she was dealt another cruelty. In 1978, a hundred and nineteen years after she was laid to rest, vandals roamed through Ellsworth Cemetery at nighttime and smashed her gravestone!

* * *

It is not possible to say with certainty what happened to Levant.

The Census of 1880 lists L. V. May, 55, farm worker, and wife Roxana, 50, living with their four children on the farm of Paul Tew, second husband of the widow Emily Louisa Stone, a daughter of Isaac May. In this census L. V. May said his father was born in Pennsylvania. All of Harvey May's children were born in Vermont or New York.

However, the eldest son of L. V. and Roxana, according to that 1880 census was Harvey May, 18. There were three daughters: Lydia E. May, 16, Rosie, 13, and Martha, 7.

Was L. V. May Levant? Was he a grandson of Harvey May of Conesus, and a nephew of Isaac? Was he the eldest son of Harvey May who was listed, at age 44, in the 1850 census of Springwater, New York? And was that Harvey, in fact, Harvey May, Jr., one of the two unidentified sons of Harvey and Joanna of Conesus? They are puzzling questions.

Hiram S. May

28

Hiram S. May, Wife Start a Restaurant

HIRAM SYLVESTER MAY had lived on farms in two other states when he moved to Michigan at age 18 with his parents, Joab and Mary May.

Hiram was born on the May farm in Springwater Township of Livingston County, New York, on December 22, 1844. How he came to be christened Hiram Sylvester seems obvious: Hiram was the Christian name of Uncle Hiram, Joab's brother; Sylvester was the Christian name of the family's minister and friend -- the Rev. Sylvester Morris, Jr.

Hiram was about 5 when Joab emigrated from New York, taking his family to Townsend Township, Sandusky County, Ohio. The family remained in Townsend for nearly fifteen years. Thus, what education Hiram got, which was not much, he received it in the one-room log schoolhouse situated less than a mile from home. Several May children attended the school.

After Joab resettled in Michigan, Hiram's responsibility was work on his father's farm in Medina Township of Lenawee County.

Soon after arrival in Michigan there was romance in Hiram's life. A neighbor of Joab in Medina was Chester Arthur Smith, who had several unmarried daughters. Only a fence separated the Smith girls and two young bachelors at the May home. The fence was not much of a barrier.

Maria Jane Smith (the name was pronounced Meh-rye-ah) was an attractive young lady and a year younger than Hiram. She had dark brown eyes and dark brown hair, a coloring which was in contrast with that of the blue-eyed, blond Hiram whose heart she captured.

Joab May and Chester Smith were farmers whose lives had run parallel. Both were born in Vermont. Each had moved to western New York where he found his bride. All of the children in each family were born in New York. Both men moved their families to Michigan.

Known widely in the area around the town of Morenci as "Uncle Chester," Chester Arthur Smith was like a character from fiction. He was so frugal, it was said, that he would hide staples from his wife, putting them in the barn.

Chester was the son of Stephen Smith, a resident of Massachusetts. Stephen's first wife died, leaving him with a small daughter. Stephen's second wife, Susanna, was a native of Connecticut, as was Stephen. Susanna wanted the care of her mother each time she was to deliver a child. Chester, therefore, was born in Chittenden County, Vermont, the residence of Susanna's parents after they departed Connecticut. Chester was born on November 27, 1811.

Chester's half sister married a man whose surname was Parsons. In later years Mr. Parsons owned a mill in Wolcott, New York. Chester and a brother, Leonard, came to Wolcott in 1832 to work in the Parsons mill.

In 1833 Chester married Harriet Rumsey in Rochester. She was a native of New York, born to parents who also were natives of New York.

When Mr. Parsons died prematurely, his widow was appointed administrator of his estate, which was reported to have amounted to about five hundred thousand dollars. She was, indeed, a wealthy woman! She protected her fortune well and neither Chester nor Leonard profited from the death of Mr. Parsons. In fact, they suffered from it; their half sister closed the mill and the brothers were then unemployed.

Chester and Harriet moved to the Finger Lakes area where they lived on a number of farms in and around Seneca County, where their children were born, one of whom died in infancy.

In 1855 Chester left Seneca County to resettle his family in Medina Township.

Chester and Harriet reared a fine family with as much culture as Harriet could provide. Every one of the children was taught to play the violin. Maria also was proficient at the keyboard of both piano and organ.

All of the Smith girls, perhaps to the credit of a loving mother, became excellent cooks.

The records written in the Smith family Bible ultimately were of small value insofar as proof of age was concerned.

Several of the Smith girls, wanting to show their age to be other than what was written in the Bible, erased entries and wrote in new ones. In time, of course, the family's vital records in the Good Book were a mess!

In later years, however, the Smith children reconstructed the record, including additional data relative to marriages, to the following extent:

ALFRED

FRANK E., b. Jan. 2, 1838; m. Minnie _____; d. Oct. 1, 1898.

LEWIS M., b. 1839; m. (1) Celestia Wilson, (2) Mary E. (Snow) Brown; d. Nov. 12, 1906.

MELINDA A., b. Sep. 22, 1841; m. Theodore H. May; d. Apr. 23, 1928.

ORIN, b. 1842.

ELIZABETH A., b. 1844; d. 1915.

MARIA JANE, b. Nov. 25, 1845; m. Hiram S. May; d. Feb. 29, 1916.

LYDIA, b. 1847; m. (1) _____ Wheeler, (2) Frank A. Partridge.

GEORGE W., b. Oct. 2, 1848; m. Emma H. May.

MARY, b. 1849.

ALONZO, b. 1850.

MALISSA M., b. 1851; m. Asa K. Paul; d. 1930.

* * *

Hiram and Maria were married in 1864 and settled in the Clinton County town of St. Johns where Hiram was able to find work as a day laborer.

In the beginning, for certain, life for the young couple was one of near poverty.

"We did not have to worry about mice," Hiram recalled in later years. "There wasn't enough for them to eat!"

Their first child, a son, was born on July 10, 1865. He was christened Sylvester Chester May -- Sylvester being Hiram's middle name and Chester honoring Maria's father.

More of the Mays moved to Clinton that year. Joab, Hiram's

HIRAM SYLVESTER MAY
1844-1925

MARIA JANE (SMITH) MAY
1845-1916

father, purchased a large farm with dwelling place and other buildings. Hiram's brothers, Marvin and Theodore, likewise bought farms in Bingham. Undoubtedly, this situation helped Hiram; if he did not find profitable work for other farmers he could expect compensation of some kind if he assisted his father and brothers.

The second child of Hiram and Maria was a daughter, born on March 1, 1867. She was named Hattie Lynn.

The third child was a son, born on December 26, 1868. He was named Eugene Ulysses. The middle name, surely, was given the boy in honor of the Civil War general, Ulysses S. Grant, who had been elected President of the United States in November preceding the baby's birth.

Eleven days following Eugene's birth, Hiram May's mother died. Her death strengthened the ties of Joab with his son Theodore. Theodore also had married one of the Smith girls from Lenawee -- Melinda. Their first child, Ella Sarah, was born in Bingham on September 2, 1869. Joab, by then, was making land deals favorable to Theodore and Marvin and he started living in Theodore's home.

As reported earlier, it is difficult to trace and understand all of the deeds involving Joab following Mary's death. In December, 1869, Marvin May bought land in Lenawee County again. In the same month Joab and Melinda (Theodore's wife) sold Clinton County land to Electa (Marvin's wife). In March, 1870, Theodore sold Clinton land to Joab and then in May, Joab sold Clinton land to Theodore.

The only transaction involving Hiram took place in November of 1870 when Joab sold his youngest son one acre, presumably with a small house thereon, for two hundred and seventy-five dollars.

In the meantime Maria had given Hiram their third son, Willie, born on May 25, 1870.

So Hiram and Maria had a family of three sons and one daughter when they moved into their Bingham Township home on April 1, 1871, as permitted under the terms of the contract.

It was June -- the year 1871 -- when Joab sold what remained of his Clinton County land to Hiram Nestell. The exodus of the May family from Bingham -- excepting Hiram -- was now under way.

The agreement under which Hiram bought the acre of land from his father, as it appears in the records of the Clinton County Register of Deeds, says:

THIS INDENTURE, made this Twenty-fifth day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy, between Joab May of St. Johns, Clinton County, Michigan, of the first part, and Hiram S. May of the same place of the second part,

Witnesseth, that the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Two hundred and Seventy-five Dollars, to him in hand paid by the said party of the second part, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, does by these presents grant, bargain, sell, remise, release, alien and confirm unto the said party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns, FOREVER, that certain piece or parcel of Land Known and described as follows: Commencing at the South West corner of the North half of the North West Quarter of Section Nine (9) in Township Seven (7) North of Range Two (2) West in Clinton County Michigan. Meaning thence North Ten (10) Rods, thence East Sixteen (16) Rods, thence South Ten (10) Rods, thence West Sixteen (16) Rods, to the place of beginning, containing one acre of Land,

the party of second part to have possession of the above described premises on April first 1871.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered in Presence of

Joab May /S/

A. G. Higham)
Maria J. May)

Hiram and Maria lived in Bingham Township for about eight years. Then, in 1872, they returned to Lenawee County where Marvin had purchased farming land in Sections 19 and 20 of Rome Township from Dr. E. Lapham, a Lenawee pioneer. Hiram took half of the land in Section 19. The farm was near the West Rome Baptist Church, where the Mays attended services.

This move brought Hiram and Maria into proximity with her parents. She sought, of course, to visit them frequently.

Hiram enjoyed telling the story of one visit to the home of his tight-fisted father-in-law. After hitching a horse to their buggy and driving to the Smith farmhouse, the Mays were met by a frowning Chester, standing on the porch and scanning cloudy sky. He greeted them, saying:

"Sure looks like there's a bad storm comin' up. If I were far from home, I'd be gettin' there!"

And that is exactly what we did, Hiram said.

When Marvin bought an eighty-acre farm in Branch County in January of 1879, Hiram followed, resettling his family in the village of Bronson. The four children of Hiram and Maria attended classes in the public school in the village.

As reported earlier, Theodore and Melinda also followed Marvin, moving from their farm at Chapin to a rather large farm Theodore bought at Bronson in December, 1879. So, now, the family was "together" again.

When the U. S. Census of 1880 was taken, the enumerator visited the homes of Hiram and Theodore on June 23. The family of Hiram appeared in the records as follows:

Hyram May	35	Farmer
Maria	35	Housekeeping
Silvester	15	School
Hattie	13	School
Eugene	11	School
Willie	10	School

"Togetherness" did not last long. Early in 1882 Theodore and his family left Bronson. They returned to Chapin. Marvin followed. This time, however, Hiram did not follow his brothers. He remained in Bronson for a time, taking work where he could find it.

Hiram and Maria, tired of farm life and the frequent movements of Marvin and Theodore, settled in the Central Michigan city of Owosso in 1884. Here they hoped to find a better quality of living, built on the wages he could earn in a growing industrial town. He obtained employment as an engineer at the Owosso Casket Works, one of Owosso's leading woodwork industries, engaged in the manufacture of burial caskets.

In this decade of the 1880s Hiram's family was breaking up as the children left home to establish their own households.

Sylvester went to Chapin to work as a farm hand for his uncles.

Hattie Lynn married George Shaw of Branch County and they also settled in Owosso where Hattie gave birth to a daughter, Gracie May Shaw, in February of 1888. The infant died on September 21. She was Hattie's only child.

Eugene, only 15, obtained a job in one of Owosso's major printing companies.

Willie -- now calling himself Will -- also found work in Owosso.

When the Owosso City Directory of 1894 was published, it

HATTIE LYNN AND HER HUSBAND

Hattie Lynn, only daughter of Hiram and Maria May, was the wife of George Shaw from Branch County. Their only child died seven months after birth in 1888. Hattie died in 1901. She was 33. George did not remarry.

listed Hiram S. May as "engineer, O Casket Wks, res 607 Clinton." That address placed him in one of a row of one-story brick flats, just around the corner from the factory in which he worked.

Six years later, when the census of 1900 was taken, Hiram and Maria were living in a rented home at 309 South Shiawassee Street. He was listed as a "day laborer," age 55.

One of Maria's prized possessions at this time was an organ on which she played hymns or popular music for the family or guests. Music was important in her life and she inspired an interest on Hiram's part. He learned to play the violin to the extent that they were called upon to play for square dances. She played the piano while Hiram fiddled and did the calling.

George and Hattie Shaw in 1900 were making their home on Morris Street. Hattie, however, was in poor health after the death of her daughter. She died on January 11, 1901, and was

buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in a grave next to that of the infant. George continued to live in Owosso and the nearby town of Corunna until his death on September 7, 1925.

Owosso in the 1890s and the early years of the Twentieth Century was a busy railway center. Three of Michigan's principal rail systems passed through the city, carrying a large volume of passenger traffic as well as freight and mail. The Ann Arbor Railroad and the Grand Trunk Western had busy passenger stations in downtown Owosso. Trains of both of these lines also made stops at the West Owosso depot of the Michigan Central Railroad.

With fifteen or more trains stopping daily at the western terminal, the community known as "West Town" was thriving on money spent by travelers. The three-block-long business center was an easy walk from the station. Visiting the town was an interesting thing to do for the salesman, or any traveler, who was faced with the necessity of a brief lay over while changing trains.

Hiram saw a good business opportunity in this situation. Maria Jane May was an excellent cook. It was said by some in Owosso who were skilled in culinary art that there were few in the city who were her equal. So Hiram and Maria started a business establishment of their own, May's Restaurant and Lunches, at 910 West Main Street, a few blocks from the railway station.

Maria's "home-style cooking" assured them a steady local patronage as well as attracting many of the traveling people. While she was in charge of the kitchen, Hiram kept busy "up front" where he tended a candy, ice cream and tobacco counter. He also was a dealer in small amounts of fresh fruits.

Selling ice cream, however, was not a new experience for Hiram. In earlier years he and Maria had found they could supplement his income by selling ice cream cones as street vendors during Fourth of July celebrations and other occasions that attracted large crowds into Owosso. Hiram would construct a curbside stand, a tentlike structure consisting of a wooden frame wrapped in bunting or other cloth, from which they hawked the offered refreshments -- lemonade and candy as well as ice cream.

An interesting facet about such an enterprise (circa 1900) is the fact that the "cone" had not yet been invented. Hiram and Maria would arise at three or four o'clock in the morning so they would have several hours in which to prepare little cakes which they rolled into the form of a cone to hold the ice cream. Factory-manufactured ice cream cones were not available to vendors until several years later. The ice cream

cone, as it is known today, was introduced at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904.

The economic outlook for Hiram and Maria, perhaps for the first time in their married life, appeared promising after they established the restaurant. It was a better life, a better income than they had experienced while rearing a family on Hiram's wages as a laborer. But it was not to last. Within a few years Maria's health was failing . . . and Hiram's advancing age made it difficult for him to continue the business without her help. He gave up.

Maria's ailment was cancer. She died on February 29, 1916, in their small apartment at 212½ South Washington Street, on the second floor of a business building in downtown Owosso. The funeral was held in Will May's home on March 3 and she was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery.

MAY'S RESTAURANT

Hiram S. May and wife, Maria, standing in doorway of their restaurant in West Owosso in 1903. At right is their eldest son, S. C. May, who sold popcorn from the first Cretors machine operated by anyone in the city.

After Maria's death life was more difficult for Hiram, in part because he didn't have a home. For a short time he lived in Sylvester's home. He tried to be "no trouble," he said. Still, it was not a good arrangement; he did not feel really welcome.

He tried living alone in a rented room, on the second floor over a tobacco store in the center of the city. He had his teapot in which he could brew his favorite beverage. Crackers and tea -- or toast and tea -- usually provided him with what nourishment he wanted. If he wanted more -- a heartier breakfast or a more substantial dinner -- he went to Will's restaurant. He was encouraged by Will to come to the restaurant even more than he did.

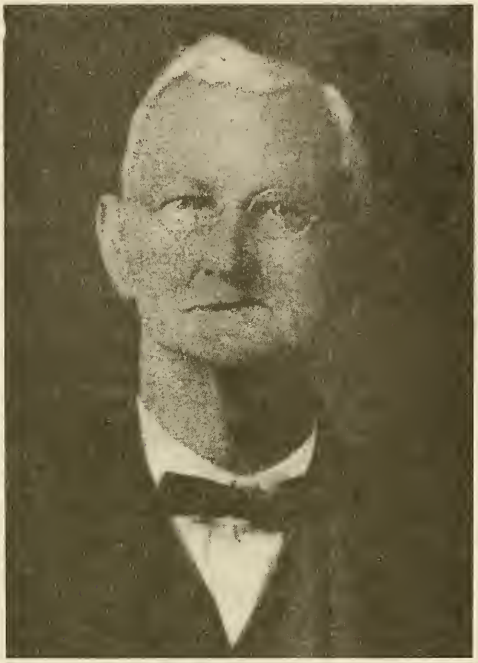
Hiram was well known and respected in the business community, but he was nevertheless a lonely man. He was a fatherly figure, spoken of as "Grandpa May" by many in the downtown area. Now in his 70s, he was paunchy, walked slowly. He was balding at the temples, yet he had a fairly full head of hair -- silvery white. His soft blue eyes looked out through gold wire-rimmed spectacles. In good weather he nearly always wore a flat straw hat. He usually carried an umbrella which served as a cane if he felt he needed one.

"Grandpa May" was a pleasant-natured man who had no want for alcoholic drink. He did not use tobacco. Always he preferred tea to coffee. He did have an amusing "vice" . . . he liked salted peanuts, but not to consume them as do most peanut lovers. He enjoyed having one in his mouth to savor its flavor as long as that one peanut would last; a few of them would last through the day.

Hiram enjoyed the presence of people he knew in Owosso's business district. Often he might be found sitting with the firemen in chairs lined up in front of the city's firehouse. He liked to hear the firemen's tales; he spoke little himself.

In 1923 Hiram took over the operation of a small portable building Will had hired built for himself and located on a piece of city-owned property at the northern end of a bridge on South Washington Street. Referred to by Will as being a "stand," the structure had a floor area of about five by eight feet and was heated in chilly or wintry weather with a kerosene burner. When the wooden awning front was lifted, the stand was open for business.

Will's idea for a business of this kind was patterned after the success of the large popcorn wagons which were coming into popularity. He obtained, at no cost, city permission to erect the stand on the river bank, at street level, where the bridge structure began. The city fathers expressed no objection to its location, so long as it could be moved away



HIRAM S. MAY
His Last Photograph

whenever they might want it removed. The location was good because South Washington Street was the route of pedestrian traffic to the depots of both the Ann Arbor and Grand Trunk Western railway systems. Also, most parades permitted in the city, especially circus parades, used the South Washington Street bridge.

Hiram kept the little store open six days each week, from late morning until near sunset. He sold ice cream cones, soft drinks, candy bars, chewing gum and tobacco products. His profits certainly were small; he was fortunate, he said, to be able to earn a few dollars a week.

Hiram's grief over the death of Maria never ended. He would never find peace or comfort again, he frequently said, until he was with Maria "up there on the hill" (the cemetery).

In the final years of his life Hiram lived part of the time in Will's home. Again he wanted to be "no trouble" and early each evening he would excuse himself from the family,

saying it was time for him "to climb those golden stairs" to his bedroom.

On December 21, 1925 -- the day before his 80th birthday -- "Grandpa May" suffered a paralyzing stroke. He could not talk; he could move very little. Yet, at the outset, he seemed to hear and understand. He appeared to be pleased when told the following day that he now was 80 years old, a milestone he had hoped to see. Then his condition worsened.

Once it seemed he was being disturbed by some flickering shadows on the wall. His granddaughter, Ethyl Pichiotino, sought to determine how or why the light bothered him.

"Is it grandma?" she asked. "Did you see grandma?"

In the only way he could make response, a feeble effort to turn the sounds from his throat into words, he indicated that she had come. He believed Maria was there.

At 4 o'clock in the morning on January 13, 1925, Hiram S. May died.

He was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery at the side of his beloved Maria.

Eugene May

29

Eugene May Becomes Printer in Owosso

WHEN HIRAM S. MAY quit farm work and turned to urban life he also opened a path for his sons.

Eugene U. May, the second eldest son, in 1884 became the first of the family to find employment in Owosso, then a rapidly growing manufacturing town and railway hub in Central Michigan. "Gene" -- as he was best known -- began his career as a $1-per-week printer's devil at The Owosso Times, a newspaper which also did a large volume of job printing.

Gene's employer was George M. Dewey, who had acquired The Times in 1881. The newspaper had been founded in 1879 by Lucius E. Gould, who first published it in the nearby village of Vernon as a Republican weekly.

George M. Dewey was the grandfather of Thomas E. Dewey, the Republican candidate for President of the United States in 1944 and 1948. Thomas E. Dewey's father, George M. Dewey, Jr., was a printer at The Times.

The Deweys erected a building for their printing business at the northwest corner of Park and Main streets in 1889. The Times Printing Company was owned by the Dewey family until it was sold in 1923 to S. W. F. Garnett. In 1926 the business was sold to The Owosso Argus-Press, publishers of Owosso's daily newspaper.

It was Gene May's connection with The Times that ultimately inspired his elder brother, Sylvester, to give up working as a farm hand and also become a printer. His younger brother, Will, was not interested in the printing business, but he, too, followed Gene in turning to Owosso as a city in which he could find employment more rewarding than life on the farm.

After he became a skilled printer, Gene became more active in Owosso. Garrulous and filled with enthusiasm for his every undertaking, he soon was well known in the city.

Gene married Glennie D. Strickland. Their only child, a son, Earl Eugene, was born in Owosso on April 12, 1895.

When the U. S. Census of 1900 was taken in Owosso, Gene May was one of the enumerators, an assignment he enjoyed because it offered so much opportunity to meet and talk with many of Owosso's inhabitants.

By this time all of the May family was living in Owosso and engaged in business activity of one kind or another. So the Mays were becoming well known in the city.

After leaving The Owosso Times, Eugene owned Custom Printing Service in Owosso. He left that to purchase the Elsie Sun, a weekly newspaper published in the village of Elsie in Clinton County. After a short time, however, he moved to Boyne City where he combined the two weekly papers of Elsie and Boyne City into one publication. He was the publisher of that newspaper until he sold the company and moved to Lansing, Michigan's capital city, in 1909.

In Lansing Gene worked for The Lansing Republican, a newspaper which later became The State Journal, one of Michigan's largest and most respected dailies.

Eugene for a while was foreman of the printing plant at the Capital News. When that newspaper ceased publishing, he started the Lansing Independent, a small newspaper which in time brought him a measure of eminence as a thinking writer. An editorial he published on November 4, 1932 -- in the era of the Great Depression -- was credited largely with giving impetus to legislation leading to the Federal Depositors Insurance Corporation (FDIC) under which most bank deposits in the nation today are insured against bank failure.

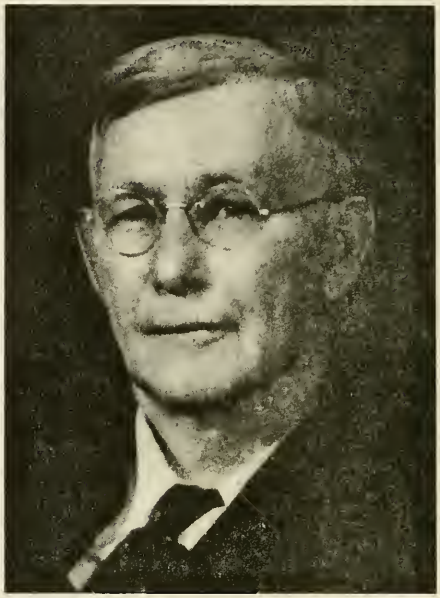
His editorial outlined the program for insurance of bank deposits. The idea was picked up by Senator Arthur H. Vandenburg of Michigan and was introduced into the legislative circles in Washington. The agency was established during the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

When the economic conditions of the Great Depression forced Eugene to halt publication of the Lansing Independent he returned to The State Journal and was made night foreman of the printing department. He left the Journal in 1938 to once again establish his own business concern. This time it was the Michigan Printing Service, a company located in the downtown area of Lansing. It was a successful business in which he was joined by his son.

EUGENE ULYSSES MAY
1868 - 1955

At one time a first vice president of the Michigan Typographical Union, Gene was credited with bringing about the first Labor Day parade in Lansing. Soon after his arrival in Lansing in 1909 he approached leading industrialists and civic leaders, seeking contributions with which he could push the parade proposal. Beginning with a contribution of $50 he built the fund to upwards of $20,000. The parade became an annual event, but was discontinued about 1950.

Always interested in civic affairs, Gene at one time served as president of the East Side Commercial Club. For many years he was a member of the Elks and Odd Fellows brotherhoods, both in Owosso and Lansing.



Eugene U. May in late years . . . a staunch union man, but a conservative Republican.

Gene was an ardent, conservative Republican who was jolted by the success of Franklin D. Roosevelt in winning an unprecedented third term in the White House. On November 10, 1940, he wrote in a letter to the author:

"I must confess that I underestimated the number of WPA recipients, Communists, CIO radicals, crackpot New Dealers, weak-kneed Republicans, etc., etc., who would still, after nearly eight years of borrowing and giving away billions of dollars, vote to continue this crackpot alphabetical experimentation. I thought that the workers (and those without work) would be glad of an opportunity to go to work at REAL jobs (which would have resulted from the election of Wendell Willkie) where they would be self-supporting and not feel that they had to depend upon governmental borrowed money.

" . . . With government interference in industry, and our government borrowing having reached its limit, what will there be left to lift us out of the deplorable condition which the New Deal idiotic experimentation has got us into?"

At that time the Public Debt of the United States stood at approximately forty-three billion dollars. It is interesting to speculate on what Eugene May would have written if he had

lived to see that Public Debt exceed a trillion dollars, as it did in 1981.

Gene operated the Michigan Printing Service until failing health forced his retirement in 1954, four years following the death of his wife on February 20, 1950. At retirement he was said to be -- at age 86 -- the oldest active printer in Michigan. The business was taken over by Earl.

Eugene U. May died in a Lansing hospital on October 22, 1955. The funeral service was held in Lansing. His body was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Owosso, alongside the grave of Glennie.

Earl Eugene May had followed in his father's footsteps in becoming a printer. Before settling down in that occupation,

Earl E. May

however, he had gained some recognition as an actor in summer theater and as a dirt-track racing driver.

It was while he was on the road as an actor that Earl met Violet Hilda Kibby in Frankfort, Michigan, the town where she was born on November 1, 1897.

Four children were born to Earl and Violet: Jack Edsel, Charles Robert, Harold Eugene and Violet Louise.

Following a separation from Violet, Earl married Winifred Ida King of Lansing. Violet moved to Arizona with her daughter.

After a few years Earl decided to terminate the printing business his father had established. He wanted to devote more time to his hobby, gun collecting. As a federal firearms licensed dealer, he became the proprietor of Guns at May's, a business he was able to operate within his home.

Earl E. May died in Lansing on October 7, 1980.

FAMILY OF EUGENE U. MAY

EUGENE ULYSSES MAY, b. Clinton Co., Mich., Dec. 26, 1868; m. Glennie D. Strickland; he d. Lansing, Mich., Oct. 22, 1955; she d. Lansing, Feb. 20, 1950. One child.

1. EARL EUGENE, b. Owosso, Mich., Apr. 12, 1895; m. (1) Violet H. Kibby, (2) Winifred I. King; he d. Lansing, Oct. 7, 1980.
   Children by Violet
   - i. JACK EDSEL, b. Detroit, Mich., Aug. 13, 1915; m. (1) Betty Fillingham, (2) Anna L. Crawford.
   - ii. CHARLES ROBERT, b. Owosso, Sep. 14, 1916; m. Tommie M. Gilliam.
   - iii. HAROLD EUGENE, b. Lansing, Aug. 20, 1917; m. (1) Betsy J. Buck, (2) Betty J. Miller.
   - iv. VIOLET LOUISE, b. Portland, Mich., Dec. 3, 1922.

S. C. May

30

S. C. May Quits Farm to Become a Printer

SYLVESTER MAY -- who nearly always wrote his name with only the initials, S. C. May -- was the last of the three brothers to quit farm work. He was, as mentioned earlier, finally swayed by the enthusiasm of Eugene in his career as a printer.

With Gene's assistance, "Vet" -- that was his nickname -- also obtained employment at The Owosso Times. The elder brother soon found city life to his liking; the transition of Hiram S. May's family from rural to urban was now complete.

In 1889 S. C. May, at 24, married 18-year-old Eliza Reed. It was, however, a marriage of brief duration, ending in separation and divorce.

A number of years later, S. C. May wooed and won the hand of Caroline Emily Bonnell, a fellow employee in the printing business. Caroline, commonly called "Carrie," was a native of Highland Park, Illinois, where she was born on October 5, 1885. "Vet" and "Carrie" were married in Owosso on September 5, 1906.

One child was born to Vet and Carrie, a son who was christened Elwin Jennings May. The Jennings was in honor of William Jennings Bryan, the great orator but losing presidential candidate in the national elections of 1896, 1900 and 1908. Elwin was born in Owosso on July 12, 1909.

S. C. May left Owosso in 1923, taking his family to Tecumseh, Michigan, where both he and Carrie obtained employment as printers at the Tecumseh Herald. It was a company which did a large volume of commercial printing in addition to publishing the town's newspaper. The couple worked for the Herald company for more than twenty years.

SYLVESTER CHESTER MAY
1865 - 1957

When Vet and Carrie retired together in 1945, he was considered to be, at age 80, one of the oldest working printers in Michigan. He was three years older than brother Gene, who was still engaged in the printing business.

Soon after retiring, Vet and Carry moved to Muskegon, Michigan, to be near their son and his family.

As they had in their working years, Vet and Carrie lived a quiet existence in Muskegon where they observed their Golden Wedding anniversary -- quietly -- in 1956.

S. C. May died in a Muskegon hospital on March 15, 1957. After a funeral service in Muskegon, his body was taken to Owosso for burial in the cemetery plot where his father and mother were buried.

Caroline E. May lived alone in Muskegon until her death on February 21, 1965. She was buried in Owosso, in a grave next to that of her husband.

* * *

Elwin Jennings May attended school in Owosso until the family moved to Tecumseh. He was a 1927 graduate of Tecumseh High School and later was a graduate of the Anthony Wayne Business Institute in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

On April 19, 1935, Elwin and Elizabeth (Bette) Ann Hall, of Tecumseh, were married in Jackson, Michigan.

In the early years of their marriage Elwin and Bette made their home in Tecumseh where he was employed by the Tecumseh Products Company and in the United States Post Office.

Starting with his employment as a postal worker, Elwin became a career civil service worker. During World War II he was an employe of the U. S. Naval Ordnance, assigned to defense work in Muskegon.

After the war he became an agent for the U. S. Treasury Department, working in Muskegon for the Internal Revenue Service. Upon leaving federal service, a number of years later, he became an employe of the Michigan Department of Internal Revnue.

In 1970 Elwin and Bette May moved to Lehigh, Florida, where he worked for the newspaper, the Lehigh News, for four years.

In 1974 Elwin retired from his newspaper job -- he called it his "second retirement" -- and bought a pleasant home on a mountain at the outskirts of Waynesville, North Carolina, where he could pursue one of his favorite hobbies, gardening.

Elwin and Bette May were the parents of four children. Elwyn Jennings May, Jr. (they spelled his name with a "y"), was born in Tecumseh on March 15, 1936. Carole Dian was born in Tecumseh on December 11, 1938. The third and fourth, born in Muskegon, were Deborah Paulette on April 27, 1949, and Russell Andrew on January 4, 1951.

Fate prevented Elwin and Bette May from enjoying their North Carolina "dream home" for more than two years. Elwin became ill in the summer of 1976. It was not, at first, believed to be serious. On August 15, Elwin died.

The funeral was held in Grace Episcopal Church on August 18. On the following day Elwin's body was interred in the Brookside Cemetery at Tecumseh.

E. J. May

FAMILY OF SYLVESTER C. MAY

SYLVESTER CHESTER MAY, b. Clinton Co., Mich., July 10, 1865; m. (1) Eliza Reed, Owosso, Mich., 1891, (2) Caroline Emily Bonnell, Owosso, Mich., Sep. 5, 1906; he d. Muskegon, Mich., Mar. 15, 1957; Caroline d. Muskegon, Feb. 21, 1965. One child, by Caroline.

1. ELWIN JENNINGS, b. Owosso, July 12, 1909; m. Elizabeth (Bette) Ann Hall, Apr. 18, 1935; he d. Waynesville, N. C., Aug. 15, 1976. Four children:
   - i. ELWYN JENNINGS, b. Tecumseh, Mich., Mar. 15, 1936; m. (1) Janice Beadle, (2) Joyce Margaret Tapia.
   - ii. CAROLE DIAN, b. Tecumseh, Dec. 11, 1938; m. David G. Kramer.
   - iii. DEBORAH PAULETTE, b. Muskegon, Apr. 27, 1949; m. Jack Preston.
   - iv. RUSSELL ANDREW, b. Muskegon, Jan. 4, 1951; m. Laura Lee Raven.

"VET" AND "CARRIE" MAY WHEN THEY OBSERVED THEIR GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

GENEALOGICAL CHART

SYLVESTER C. MAY
HATTIE LYNN MAY
EUGENE U. MAY
WILLIAM A. MAY

2 HIRAM[8] SYLVESTER MAY
father
Born: 22 Dec. 1844
Where: Springwater, N.Y.
Died: 13 Jan. 1925
Where: Owosso, Mich.

3 MARIA JANE SMITH
mother
Born 25 Nov. 1845
Where Seneca Falls, N.Y.
Died 29 Feb. 1916
Where Owosso, Mich.

4 JOAB[7] YOUNG MAY
grandfather
Born: 5 Mar. 1800
Where: Strafford, Vt.
Died: 25 Dec. 1885
Where: Bannister, Mich.

5 MARY GRIGGS
grandmother
Born: 27 Apr. 1806
Where: Cayuga, N.Y.
Died 7 Jan. 1869
Where. St. Johns, Mich.

6 CHESTER ARTHUR SMITH
grandfather
Born: 27 Nov. 1811
Where: Chittenden Co., Vt.
Died 18 Apr. 1888
Where Lenawee Co., Mich.

7 HARRIET RUMSEY
grandmother
Born 3 Apr. 1814
Where Monroe Co., N.Y.
Died 20 Mar. 1895
Where Morenci, Mich.

8 HARVEY[6] MAY
g. grandfather
Born: 30 Mar. 1773
Where: Lyme, N.H.
Died
Where Conesus, N.Y.

9 JOANNA WEDGE
g. grandmother
Born
Where Kent, Conn.
Died.
Where. Conesus, N.Y.

10 SALMON GRIGGS
g. grandfather
Born:
Where:
Died:
Where

11 PHILENA BOLSTER
g. grandmother
Born:
Where:
Died
Where

12
g. grandfather
Born:
Where:
Died.
Where:

13
g. grandmother
Born:
Where:
Died
Where.

14
g. grandfather
Born
Where
Died
Where

15
g. grandmother
Born
Where
Died:
Where

16 HEZEKIAH[5] MAY (1736-1819)
g. g. grandfather

17 ELIZABETH[8] CARPENTER
g. g. grandmother

18 JOHN WEDGE
g.g. grandfather

19 ANNAH BROWN (1751-)
g. g. grandmother

20
g. g. grandfather

21
g. g. grandmother

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g. g. grandfather

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g. g. grandmother

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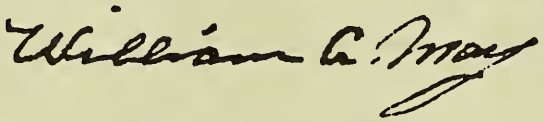
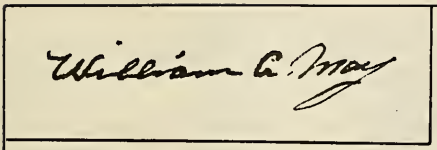
PART 4

A RESTAURATEUR
WHO WAS AN AMIABLE
JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES



of St. Johns and
Owosso, Michigan
1870 -- 1931

Reared on Farms, He Became a Family-Loving Man
Who Sought the Excitement and Rewards of Urban Life,
But He Was Too Adventurous to Remain in One Place,
in One Business or One Job Any Length of Time



William A. May
Was "Hamburg Bill"

A CLIPPING from a newspaper in the Central Michigan town of Owosso reports:

WILLIAM MAY PUTS
ON THRILLING STUNT

William May of the Arcade restaurant made a thrilling stop of a runaway on East Main street Tuesday afternoon. A horse belonging to the Mulhall-Erb Co., dashed wildly down the street, endangering pedestrians and rigs, and as it passed Washington street May gave chase. He caught up with the rear end of the wagon and climbed to the seat. Grabbing the reins, he succeeded in stopping the runaway within a block.

The news item -- it bears no date, but was clipped about 1915 -- provides a minipicture of William Albert May, the youngest son of Hiram S. and Maria Jane May. He was impulsive, energetic, inventive. He was a dreamer. He was attractive -- as a young man and at middle age. He was a "horse trader," a man always willing to talk about a deal on anything he owned.

His was the first generation of his ancestral line -- going back more than two hundred and fifty years in America -- to break completely with farm life. He never wanted a farm; he didn't even like to keep a garden. He preferred life as

it was in the cities. He was employed in Detroit for a time in restaurant management. However, he lived in Owosso during most of his life.

He was fascinated by automobiles and almost any kind of machinery. When Henry Ford started mass production of the auto, Will May was the first in Owosso to buy one. In character, he sold his Ford, a touring car, to James Oliver Curwood when the world-famous novelist offered him a profit on the deal.

But . . . back to the beginning of Will's story --

His name, in fact, was not William Albert May. When he was born on May 25, 1870, in Bingham Township of Clinton County, his mother insisted that he would be christened Willie. Also she was quite adamant in her decision that his middle name would be Albertie. He was spared the latter through the fact that his name was registered with the Clinton county clerk's office as "Willie A. May."

Through his boyhood years he remained "Willie." When he became a young man, he changed it himself to "Will." In legal affairs and business matters he signed his name William A. May, claiming that the A. stood for Albert.

Will May received little formal education, although he was said to have been an apt pupil. He was not yet of school age when the May family moved from Clinton County to a small farm in Rome Township, Lenawee County. It seems likely he started school in Lenawee, but he was only 7 years old when the family moved to Bronson, in Branch County. He was a pupil in the Bronson Public School for several years.

A cousin, Nora (Smith) Albaugh, in later years recalled her memories of Willie in Bronson. She described him as being a "pill" who more than once grabbed her lunch box from her and ran off with it. Despite his "smarty" antics, however, she said Willie had a reputation of being "a good boy, perhaps more obedient to his parents than either of his elder brothers."

Willie's school days apparently came to an end when the family returned to Central Michigan from Bronson about 1884.

Will May at 14 was more interested in obtaining a paying job than he was in schoolbooks. As his father turned from farm employment to jobs in growing industry, Will also sought factory work.

In 1888 Will May came to Owosso, where his brother Eugene had joined a printing firm in 1884. Will obtained factory employment as an engineer . . . i. e., one who operates an engine or machinery.

WILLIAM A. MAY
Bridegroom at 20

Will, not yet 21, was married to Pearl Maud Emmons, 17, on New Year's Eve of 1890 in the St. Johns Methodist Episcopal Church by the Rev. C. G. Thomas.

Born on October 28, 1873, in Clinton County where Will also was born, Miss Emmons was a daughter of Philanous and Sarah (Ritter) Emmons, natives of Seneca County, New York.

Will and his bride settled in Owosso. Their childless marriage, however, did not last. Within a few years it ended in divorce, after which Pearl married Fred Gardner, a Clinton County farmer. After his death on April 11, 1930, she became the wife of Kine Moneypenny, a widower. He died on January 10, 1944. Pearl died on January 17, 1957, at 83, and was buried in Maple Grove Cemetery at Ovid.

In 1899 Will married a second time. He wed Bertha Sweet.

Bertha, born in Chesaning, Michigan, on April 29, 1882, was a daughter of George and Minnie (Miller) Sweet, of Chesaning, in Saginaw County. Mr. Sweet was a native of Vermont; Mrs. Sweet was born in Seneca County, Ohio.

Iva Violet May, born in Owosso on December 22, 1899, was the first child of Will and Bertha. The second was a son, Earl, born two years later.

However, Will's second marriage, like the first, was not harmonious. The young couple separated. Bertha moved to Toledo, Ohio, taking the children. When a divorce decree was granted, Bertha married Arthur B. Naus.

Will continued to show his affection for the children, visiting them as often as he could. He suffered a grievous loss when Earl died in Toledo on September 28, 1907, a victim of spinal meningitis.

Iva was reared in Toledo, married there, and raised a large family.

Mrs. Naus died in Toledo on June 26, 1926.

* * *

Will was a motorman-conductor for the Owosso Street Railway system when he became enamored with Bertha Luella Loucks, a Canadian-born young woman who found it thrilling to ride the streetcar. The rail line extended from West Owosso to the county seat, Corunna, three miles east of Owosso. Streetcar fare never was more than a few cents and the token permitted the patron to travel the full length of the run -- a distance of about six miles each direction.

Although Will May was a number of years older than Bertha their "streetcar romance" blossomed. In 1901 they were married . . . and it proved to be a good marriage for Will, one which lasted the rest of his life.

Will May loved children and was a kind and generous father, one who encouraged his sons and daughters to obtain as much education as the family could afford. And, with a lot of help from Bertha, the children always were dressed well.

Both Will and Bertha wanted their family Christmas observances to be splendid events -- and they were, even if it broke the family bank to make them so!

Bertha was the mother of four children, all born in Owosso:

CLIFFORD CLAIR	b.	May 28, 1902
ETHYL BEATRICE		Aug. 5, 1904
EVAH MARGUERITE		Apr. 26, 1907
WILLIAM ALLEN		June 10, 1912

WILL MAY, BEHIND THE COUNTER IN THE FARMER'S HOME . .
Dinner Was Served at Noon for 20 Cents

Will May long had dreamed of being a businessman, of being free from "a job" in a factory or with the streetcar system. With an eye on the success his father and mother had enjoyed in their restaurant business in West Owosso, he decided to go into the restaurant business in downtown Owosso . . . and Bertha, like Will's mother, was a good partner because she was an excellent pastry cook.

Will and Bertha opened their restaurant -- which they called The Farmer's Home -- in 1910. It was located on East Main Street, adjoining a bank building at the city's main intersection. It was a small restaurant in a one-story wooden building.

Although The Farmer's Home was a very successful venture (Bertha described it as being the only "gold mine" they ever had), Will's "horse-trader" nature prevented him from staying in the one place. After building up the business, he sold it.

BERTHA LUELLA (LOUCKS) MAY
1886-1977

WILLIAM ALBERT MAY
1870-1931

Then he bought it back -- and sold it again! Between 1910 and 1928 he was the proprietor of seven restaurants at various times, all situated within a city block of Owosso's center of town -- the intersection of Main and Washington streets.

The Farmer's Home had electric lights, quite a new thing in Owosso in 1910, but it also retained its old gas lights . . . in case there might be a power failure.

Many years after Will's death, Bertha, at age 90, recalled the prosperity they found in serving a full noontime dinner for twenty cents! Dinner was served from 11:30 to 1:30. It was usually a choice of beef or pork roast and it included dessert unless pie was requested; that was five cents extra.

"Our customers mostly were farmers," she said. "They came to town and stayed all day. They would put their horses in either the 'big feed barn' which charged ten cents, or in a smaller nearby barn which charged five cents. The charge covered both a stall and feed."

Customers expected hearty meals, she said, and they would not patronize restaurants which did not accommodate their appetites.

"Our twenty-cent meal consisted of good helpings of meat and potatoes, three slices of bread with butter, a vegetable dish, pudding, and either coffee, tea or milk."

Although the additional charge of five cents was made if pie was ordered, it was a large piece. A nine-inch pie was cut into four servings.

If it were not with the dinner, a beverage -- coffee, tea, iced tea, a soft drink, or a "schooner" of milk -- was five cents. Hot chocolate was ten cents. Doughnuts were three for a nickel. Pork, beef, hamburger, bean or egg sandwiches were five cents. A cheese sandwich was ten cents.

Will and Bertha May owned The Farmer's Home when a tornado struck Owosso . . . a tornado (called "cyclone" by residents) made famous because it hit the town on the 11th day of the 11th month of 1911 soon after 11 p. m. -- at exactly 11:11, most inhabitants insisted.

Bertha was home with her three children (and expecting their fourth in seven months). Will had closed the restaurant and walked home in the face of fairly strong winds which had been blowing for several hours. Almost immediately after he reached home, the awful noise of the "cyclone" was heard. Will braced himself against the door to hold it shut, unaware of what was sweeping a path of destruction across the town.

When it quieted down, Will ventured outside to inspect the damage.

RUINS OF A FURNITURE FACTORY AFTER THE 1911 TORNADO
The May home was a short walk from the factory

"My God, Bert," he said on return, "you won't believe what has happened out there!"

A little more than a city block from their home the furniture factory of the Estey Manufacturing Company, employer of a hundred and ten men, was a twenty-foot-high pile of debris.

There was a narrow path of destruction half way across the town.

Two people died when the tornado overturned their home, a half mile from the May house.

The twister carried off the sign from the front of the May restaurant and it never was found. No damage was done inside the restaurant.

After he sold The Farmer's Home, Will May bought the Arcadia Restaurant, a larger place, just around the corner in the same block. After he disposed of the Arcadia he bought the coffee shop and restaurant which was a part of the National Hotel, a landmark lodging place on the southwest corner of Owosso's main intersection. The three-story brick hotel was a popular home-on-the-road for traveling salesmen and the considerable number of show people who came to Owosso to perform in the theatres which offered vaudeville along with the

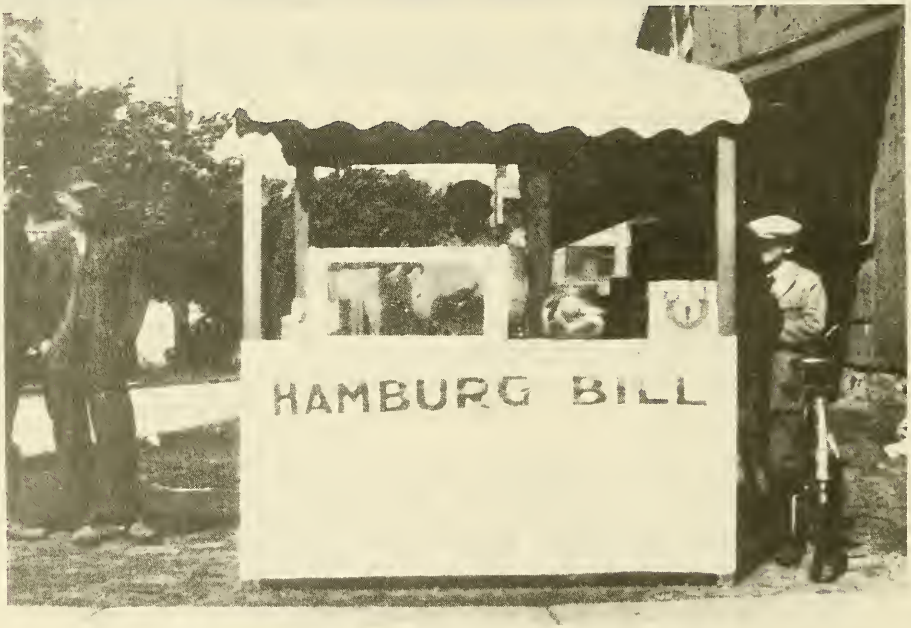
motion pictures of the silent era. Although Owosso then had a population of about twelve thousand, there were five movie theaters within a block of the National Hotel.

* * *

Any story of the life of Will May is incomplete without a description of the man's intense interest in Michigan's county fairs in pre-Depression days. He found them to be exciting, exhilarating and usually profitable.

Commencing with Fourth of July celebrations, Will and Bertha set up a tour each summer which would include some of Michigan's better known fairs -- Saginaw, Grand Rapids, Ionia, Greenville, Ithaca, Mount Pleasant. He called himself "Hamburg Bill" and, by seeking to set up his stand in the same location annually at each fair, he was creating an image of himself as the reliable dispenser of a tasty, well garnished fairgrounds-style hamburger sandwich.

The fairs were most attractive for Will in the period commencing around 1905 and ending in the mid '20s. There were no hamburger chains in the nation then; the "hamburg" was mainly a product of the county fairs and celebrations of summer holidays.



HE ENJOYED COUNTY FAIRS AS "HAMBURG BILL"

In the noisy atmosphere of the fairs, with their myriad scents of cooking food, straw, canvas, candy, grease, farm animals, Will encountered a pleasing challenge -- a test of his ability to sell his wares in a sea of sound from the throats of barkers everywhere. There was the music and all the accompanying racket from carousels, Ferris wheels, games of chance, carnival shows featuring "freaks," "monsters," "sword swallowers," "fire eaters," "belly dancers" or the exploitation of any idea that an exhibitor, or carny, could conceive. Will loved it; Bertha endured it.

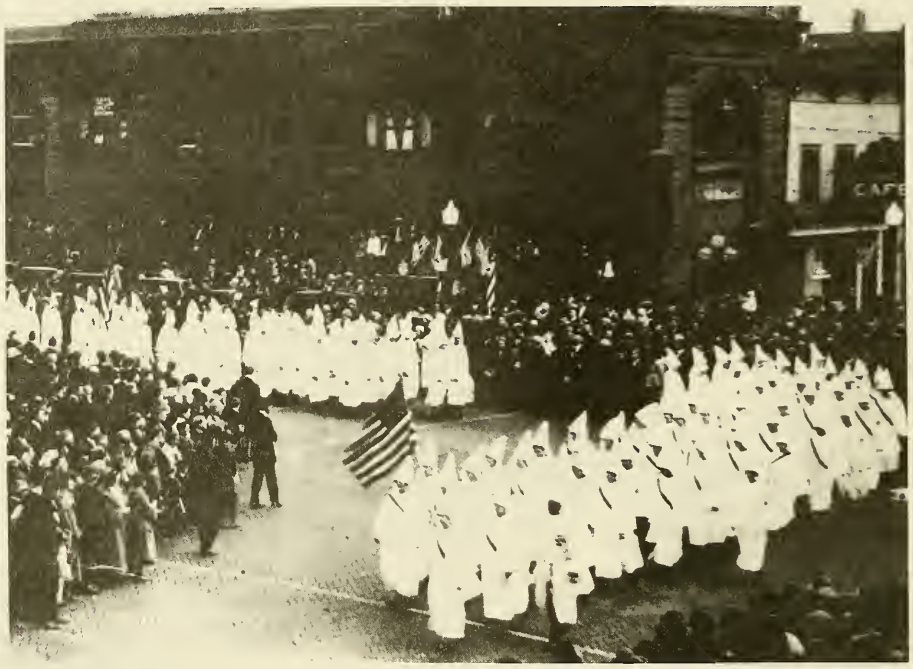
Will, of course, did not limit his fairgrounds business to the hamburger. He sold lemonade, orange drink, bottled soda pop and ice cream in cones or sandwiches. At a few fairs he tried his hand at making taffy candy, made in sight of all. But the hamburger was king with "Hamburg Bill." Unfortunately, he was unable to capitalize on the potential of the "burger." Perhaps its time had not yet come. Nonetheless, Will never dreamed there would be a time in America when fast-food chains would be feeding millions -- teen-agers and adults -- with billions of hamburgers!

There was a fascinating life style which was a part of following the fairs. Will and Bertha, and any of their children who were taken with them, sometimes lived in a tent. The tent, containing straw-filled ticks for beds, would be set up by Will alongside one of the exhibition barns or cattle sheds, at least far enough from the fair's midway to dim the cacophony of the carnival barkers when a bit of rest was essential. If Will did not take the tent to the fairgrounds, he sought rental rooms in private homes or in the small-town hotels.

Attendance at Michigan's county fairs began to slip sharply around 1927 and '28. Will and Bertha abandoned this part of their livelihood in 1928.

Regardless of his successes or failures at turning a profit as "Hamburg Bill," Will was never disinterested in the restaurant business. After he sold the National Hotel cafe -- and two other businesses he started in following years -- Will and Bertha opened a small cafe in 1922. It was across Main Street from the site of his first place, the Farmer's Home. He named the new one the American Cafe. It attracted a dependable patronage, comprised mostly of people who worked in the Owosso business district.

Will incurred debts to get the American Cafe opened. The profits were small. He and Bertha worked hard to make the business successful. Their situation, however, was not one in which they could absorb any severe jolt in their income.



OCTOBER 18, 1924: THE KU KLUX KLAN PARADES IN OWOSSO

The Great Depression, by most accounts, began on October 29, 1929, with the stock market crash that caused fifteen billion dollars in investor losses by the end of that year. For Will May, however, that depression started on a gray, misty morning, October 18, 1924. It was the day in which a few hundred members of the Ku Klux Klan of Michigan paraded on the main streets of Owosso, highlighting a statewide convention which, its leaders had forecast, would bring thousands into the city.

Hoping to supplement the cafe's income Will made a deal -- and sadly for him, only a verbal agreement -- to feed those "thousands."

The KKK had built a following in Michigan by exploiting a fear of Roman Catholicism existing among a minority of Protestants. Although its aims and actions were not widely known, the Klan exacerbated this fear with its whisperings about an alleged arms buildup within the Knights of Columbus. This, Klan spokesmen were claiming, would lead to a religious war.

His enthusiasm for the idea of feeding the KKK assembly had blinded him to its negative possibilities. The sky was cloudy in the morning of that October 18. Occasionally it rained lightly. The "thousands" who had been expected were, instead, a few "hundreds."

By midafternoon Will was becoming worried about the outcome. He had prepared several hundred pounds of roast beef. Hundreds of sandwich buns, freshly baked, were on hand. Gallons of coffee already was prepared. The cases of soft drinks were piled high.

The Saturday edition of the Owosso Argus-Press described the event:

> "Owosso today is the mecca of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Michigan, the Ladies of the Klan and the Junior Klan. The occasion is the klonklave being held on the fair grounds, principal features of which are an interesting afternoon program of acts and speaking, a parade at 4 o'clock and naturalization services conducted by the men's and women's organizations. . .
>
> "Probably 2,000 people were on the fair grounds at noon and cars filled with people were arriving steadily . . .
>
> "We have more people on the grounds now than we expected to have at this time," the local kleagle said . . .
>
> " . . . The Klan official said that he expected thousands of people would be on the grounds by night for the naturalization ceremonies. Threatening weather is believed to have kept some Klansmen away, particularly those living long distances from here . . .
>
> "Klansmen and their families began arriving here last night for the day, and early this morning cars bore them into Owosso from all directions. Klansmen in robes were posted on the important roads to direct the visitors to the grounds. . . No one was permitted to enter the grounds unless he could show a membership card or a pass. . .
>
> "Immediately following the parade there will be airplane stunts over the grounds and over the city and the plane will display a fiery cross. The "big eats" at the field are to be served at 6 o'clock and the evening program will start at 7:30 o'clock and will be concluded by a fireworks display at 10."

In its Monday edition the newspaper reported:

> "There were from 1,200 to 1,500 persons in the parade, it taking slightly less than 15 minutes to pass a given point. . .

"The parade was headed by Klan officials mounted on horses covered with white robes. They were followed by a 30-piece band from Flint, also in robes, and torch-bearing women and other officials. . .

"The parade passed through a solid lane of humanity from the time it left the fair grounds until it returned. . . It is estimated that crowd was one of the biggest, if not the biggest, that ever witnessed a parade here."

Most of the Klan people left the Fairgrounds immediately after the parade, neither buying food nor remaining for the evening program. The people Will had employed to serve the supper idly awaited the rush which never materialized.

There was anguish in Will May's face as he contemplated the enormity of the losses which he could not afford to take. He realized now that having been the Klan's purveyor plainly was a disaster for him. He had only an oral contract, no guarantee of anything. And, optimistic about the outcome, he had not insured himself against such a loss. Klan chiefs who had arrived at a "meeting-of-the-minds contract" with Will now seemed unconcerned about failure of Klansmen to buy the supper which had been arranged for them. They returned to their homes . . . leaving Will with his problems.

Will was shocked and depressed when he finally walked from the Fairgrounds at a late hour. He said little, but exclaimed at one point:

"They have ruined me!"

In the midst of his problems on the following day came one happy event. His daughter, Ethyl, the wife of a grocery store manager, Peter P. Pichiotino, gave birth to the first grandchild of Will and Bertha L. May. It was a boy, given the name James Frederick Pichiotino.

Monday morning Will started to contact charitable organizations such as the Salvation Army to learn whether or not they could put to good use, as a gift, the hundreds of dollars worth of food left from the Klan "big eats." The coffee already had been poured onto the earth.

Surprisingly, Will found he was unable to even give away the food in such quantity at that time. It was too perishable. In the end, within days, most of it was dumped into garbage cans!

Earlier in life Will might have taken such a loss with minimal complaining. But he was now 54, in failing health,

and struggling to support his family with the small income from the cafe. The KKK debacle, atop restaurant indebtedness, was an economic disaster for him. Soon thereafter, in desperation, he sold the cafe to obtain cash for creditors.

He accepted a job as assistant chef in another restaurant.

A couple of years later he made one more effort to set up a business in Owosso, a well-planned dining place situated only a block from the center of the city. However, there now was a new problem: Owosso had changed. The town no more was a gathering place for rural residents who could be served heavy meals for low prices. His new restaurant did not attract the patronage required. He closed it within a year.

He never tried again.

It was now 1928 and Owosso was starting to feel a general economic pinch, well ahead of the 1929 market crash. Will searched for employment and accepted whatever he could find. In one of those jobs he was a watchman, employed by the firm which was demolishing Owosso's old National Hotel -- in which Will had owned the coffee shop and dining room. The National was being replaced with a four-story brick Hotel Owosso, planned well before the start of the Great Depression.

WILL MAY, THE CHEF, COMFORTABLE IN THE KITCHEN

WILL MAY in 1929,
Two Years Before
His Death

On October 26, 1929, three days before the New York crash, Will wrote to his son, then a student in New York. In the letter he said his auto, "a 'rattling' good roadster," had been repossessed ten days earlier and that it was such condition that it had to be towed away.

"I don't know when I will get another for I am not working and have no money," he wrote. "I was over to Lansing last week, looking for a job, but it is worse there than it is here. Everything is shut down there and the streets are full of men looking for work."

A year later Will was happy to have a job of any kind. He was sweeping at a movie house where admission was ten cents for a double-feature program of the relatively new "talking" pictures. But the job gave Will the opportunity to see the movies -- something he enjoyed -- while earning two dollars per week! It put food on the table.

The Great Depression now had hit Owosso with full force. Those who could find any employment of any kind were glad to earn 5 to 10 cents per hour. Will May was "broke" -- as were many hundreds of others in Owosso . . . and millions across the nation.

In the winter of 1930-31 Will's health was rapidly failing. He was hospitalized in April.

A few minutes before midnight on December 6, 1931, "Willie Albertie" May died.

Outside the hospital a wintry wind was impishly whipping swirls of light snow, the prelude to a raging snowstorm that struck Michigan two nights later.

On December 9, a day when Owosso was almost paralyzed by the depth of snowdrifts, Will May's body was taken to Oak Hill Cemetery for burial alongside his father and mother.

FAMILY OF WILLIAM A. MAY

WILLIAM ALBERT MAY, b. Clinton Co., Mich., May 25, 1870; m. (1) Pearl Maud Emmons, St. Johns, Mich., Dec. 31, 1890, (2) Bertha Sweet, 1899, (3) Bertha Luella Loucks, Owosso, July 15, 1901. He d. Owosso, Dec. 6, 1931. Pearl (remarried) d. Ovid, Mich., Jan. 17, 1957. Bertha (Sweet) (remarried) d. Toledo, Ohio, June 26, 1926. Bertha L. (remarried) d. Oct. 25, 1977. Six children, two by Bertha Sweet, four by Bertha Loucks.

1. IVA VIOLET, b. Owosso, Dec. 22, 1899. m. Herbert L. Eckhart
   Children b. Toledo
   - i. EARL LEROY, b. Sep. 24, 1914; d. Toledo, Nov. 29, 1930.
   - ii. ARTHUR MURLIN, b. Jan. 26, 1918; m. Stella Senosky.
   - iii. ROBERT ELMER, b. Dec. 4, 1919; m. Alice Jean Reiter.
   - iv. HERBERT LESTER, JR., b. Dec. 17, 1922; m. Annette Galatka.
   - v. VIRGINIA ROSE, b. June 24, 1924; m. Nickolas Karambelas.
   - vi. HELEN MAE, b. July 31, 1925; m. (1) Clifford L. King, (2) Darl Weaver.
   - vii. MARVIN GEORGE, b. Sep. 7, 1926; m. Audrey Ragen

2. EARL, b. Flint, Mich., Mar. 25, 1901; d. Toledo, Sept. 28, 1907.

3. CLIFFORD CLARE, b. Owosso, May 28, 1902; m. Neva Fern DeBarr
   Children b. Owosso
   - i. MARGUERITE ELIZABETH, b. Jan. 30, 1925; m. (1) Jay A. Lingo, (2) Robert A. Caron.
   - ii. ROBERT STANLEY, b. Oct. 5, 1926; m. Eva Goret.
   - iii. VIRGINIA BEVERLY, b. Sep. 25, 1929; m. Ralph Tomlinson, Jr.
   - iv. CLIFFORD MAX, b. Mar. 23, 1931; m. Barbara Brustad.
   - v. PATRICIA ANN, b. Jan. 24, 1933; m. Lyle Hicks.

4. ETHYL BEATRICE, b. Owosso, Aug. 5, 1904; m. Peter P. Pichiotino.
   Children b. Owosso
   - i. JAMES FREDERICK, b. Oct. 19, 1924; m. Lelah Joyce Nixon.
   - ii. WILLIAM EUGENE, b. Sep. 21, 1927; m. Elizabeth Kathleen Nichols.

5. EVAH MARGUERITE, b. Owosso, Apr. 26, 1907; m. John Leslie Shuster.
   Children
   - i. DONALD LEROY, b. Owosso, Sep. 9, 1927; m. Gloria Carol M. Ellis.
   - ii. LESLIE EUGENE, b. Henderson, Mich., Sep. 22, 1929; m. Alice Louise Vondrasek.

6. WILLIAM ALLEN, b. Owosso, June 10, 1912; m. Emily Charlotte Coy.
   Children
   - i. GEORGIA LYNNE, b. Owosso, Oct. 28, 1933; m. D. Charles Mork; d. Muskegon Co., Mich., Dec. 10, 1971.
   - ii. WILLIAM ALLEN, JR., b. Owosso, May 21, 1935; m. Agnes Jean Andres.
   - iii. DIXIANA LEIGH, b. Owosso, Oct. 12, 1940; m. Carl Hilbrand.
   - iv. MICHELE ELYSA, b. Muskegon, Mich., Apr. 11, 1946.

GENEALOGICAL CHART

1 BERTHA[7] LUELLA LOUCKS
name
Born: 9 Apr. 1886
Where: Newburgh, Ont.
Died: 25 Oct. 1977
Where: Owosso, Mich.

spouse
WILLIAM ALBERT MAY

m. 28 Feb. 1867
Newburgh, Ont.

2 JOHN[6] MILES LOUCKS
father
Born: 11 Jan. 1844
Where: Battersea, Ont.
Died: 26 Sep. 1890
Where: Newburgh, Ont.

3 MARY[2] ANN McKIBBIN
mother
Born: 17 June 1850
Where: Camden East, Ont.
Died: 28 Feb. 1933
Where: Owosso, Mich.

4 FRANCIS[5] LOUCKS
grandfather
Born: 17 Feb. 1811 (bapt)
Where: Lennox Co., Ont.
Died:
Where: Lennox-Addington Co., Ont.

5 DEBORAH WAGER
grandmother
Born: Ca 1816
Where: Lennox-Addington, Ont.
Died: 13 Dec. 1890
Where: Verona, Ont.

6 JOHN[1] McKIBBIN
grandfather
Born. Ca 1820
Where Gortnagilly, Ireland
Died Early in 1850
Where Aboard ship, crossing Atlantic to Canada

7 NANCY McCARTY
grandmother
Born 1824
Where: Ballyeglish, Ireland
Died: 1 Sep. 1888
Where. Newburgh, Ont.

8 *GEORGE[4] LOUCKS
g. grandfather
Born: 1770
Where Kinderhook, N. Y.
Died:
Where: Lennox Co., Ont.

9 SARAH (SALLY) LYONS
g grandmother
Born.
Where:
Died
Where

10 THOMAS WAGER, JR.
g grandfather
Born: 4 Mar. 1791
Where Lennox Co., Ont.
Died: 15 Apr. 1871
Where:

11 MARY HUFFMAN
g. grandmother
Born: 26 June 1792 (bapt)
Where: Erneetown, Ont.
Died:
Where.

12 JOHN McKIBBIN
g. grandfather
Born:
Where: Ireland
Died:
Where: Ireland

13 SARAH FERGUSON
g grandmother
Born:
Where. Ireland
Died:
Where: Ireland

14 JOHN McCARTY
g. grandfetner
Born
Where: Ireland
Died:
Where. Ireland

15
g. grandmother
Born:
Where:
Died:
Where:

16 *JACOB[3] LOUCKS (1741-1791)
g. g. grandfather

17 KATREENA FELL (-1798)
g g grandmother

18 *LAURENCE LYONS
g.g. grandfather

19
g. g. grandmother

20 THOMAS WAGER (1762-)
g. g. grandfather

21 MARY PARLIAMENT
g. g. grandmother

22 JACOB HUFFMAN
g. g. grandfather

23 _____ EMBURY
g. g. grandmother

24
g. g. grandfather

25
g. g. grandmother

26
g. g. grandfather

27
g. g. grandmother

28
g. g. grandfather

29
g. g. grandmother

30
g. g. grandfather

31
g. g. grandmother

*--Loyalists who served in King's Royal Regiment of New York, then, after the war, eettled in Canada.

Bertha L. May.

32

Bertha: Scotch-Irish and German-American

BERTHA LUELLA LOUCKS, wife of William Albert May, was an unusual woman.

Although she was physically small and may have appeared to be lacking in strength or force, she was a tireless worker. As a young woman she was dainty, quite beautiful. As a more mature woman she became a person of unwavering pertinacity. She might be cold and stern to her critics, but was warm and sympathetic to her friends. She was thrifty; she was generous. She was a woman of honesty and truthfulness. She was strong-minded, talented and possessive. She was a loving and kindhearted mother.

Her husband called her "Bert"; siblings called her "Bertie"; her children called her "Ma."

Bertha was Canadian-Irish-German, but to any who really knew her she was Irish! She was proud of her Irish heritage and vehemently protested any inference or probability or possibility that her Irish ancestors might have been of Scottish origin.

She knew little, if anything, of her paternal line, which was German-American. She knew that the Loucks family had been among the early settlers of Upper Canada, having come to Ontario's Bay of Quinte area almost eighty years before that country became the Dominion of Canada. What she never learned was that she held the honorary designation of being a United Empire Loyalist. Her great-grandfather, two of his brothers and his father were soldiers in the King's Royal Regiment of New York in the war of the American Revolution. They were descendants of a 1709 German immigrant couple. After the Yankee "Rebels" won the war, their lands and properties were seized and sold. They fled to Montreal, thence

to Fredericksburgh to settle on land being granted to the Loyalists.

Support for King George III made outcasts of the Loucks men in New York, but in Canada they were received as "jewels in the crown" . . . heroic soldiers who had risked their lives and given up nearly all of their earthly possessions in England's futile effort to crush the rebellion in the American colonies.

In Canada the colonial Loyalists were honored with the right granted to forever use the initials U. E. (United Empire) following their names and the names of all of their descendants.

So it was -- unknown to her in her lifetime -- that she had inherited a special pedestal in her motherland . . . she was Bertha Luella Loucks, U. E.

* * *

The story of Bertha's Irish ancestry -- insofar as it can be reconstructed -- is a typical famine-years Emerald Isle drama. Its center is the county of Londonderry in the first half of the Nineteenth Century.

Nancy McCarty and John McKibbin were married about 1842 when Nancy was a lass of 18. They lived in a soddy -- a house built of sod bricks -- in the townland of Moneymore. John was a laborer and probably was illiterate, as were most of the sixteen million people then living in an Ireland which was the most overcrowded country in Europe. Nancy, however, could read and write, making her a relatively well-educated person.

John and Nancy survived the Great Famine, the worst year being 1847. Beginning in 1845, and for three years thereafter, a stubborn, unrelenting potato blight devastated Ireland's primary food crop. Epidemic fevers and starvation killed more than a million people.

As that crisis was coming to an end, however, John and Nancy suffered an additional tragedy. A smouldering fire in their soddy asphyxiated their 3-year-old son, the youngest of two. This loss, poverty, and the fierce competition for land brought them to a major decision: they would leave Ireland and follow others who had emigrated to North America in quest of employment.

Through friends, John and Nancy learned about the many mills that were being developed in Canada and they believed he would find paying work if he could get his family to the village of Clark's Mills (later renamed Camden East) in Ontario.

How John McKibbin was able to put together the money required to pay for passage to the New World is an unanswered question. It is speculated that their families may have been able to offer some assistance. The cost of passage to America was not a great amount because ship owners, profitably engaged in bringing lumber from Canada and New England to the British Isles, did not like to sail westerly with empty vessels. Furthermore, they were greedy and there was nothing to stop them from overcrowding the ships with low-paying emigrants.

John and Nancy McKibbin and their 6-year-old son James left Moneymore in the winter of 1849-50 to make the long and exhausting journey. They probably sailed from Londonderry because that city was near their home. Many emigrants went to Liverpool to obtain passage.

With a million people seeking to leave Ireland during the years of the Great Famine, leaving a million corpses on the stricken island, those seeking escape would accept almost any conditions of life on almost any kind of a vessel. Many were described as "coffin ships" because of the huge number of starving and ailing people who were packed aboard.

It truly was a "coffin ship" for John McKibbin. He died of "the fever" and was buried at sea -- meaning, in this situation, his body was brought up from among the sick and dying to be dumped overboard. The number of deaths among the Irish people who sought to cross the Atlantic under the insanitary conditions of the vessels was staggering.

Nancy McKibbin was pregnant when they set out on the transatlantic trip. Now she was a 25-year-old widow with a small son, en route to a strange country and an uncertain fate. Sympathetic sailors on the ship took charge of the lad James until they reached Montreal. When, finally, she reached the port of Kingston friends assisted her in completing the journey to Clark's Mills, which for many years was the capital of Camden Township. After the township became larger the council was moved to Centreville, after which Clark's Mills, under its new name of Camden East, was referred to as the "Ancient Capital."

In Camden East, on June 17, 1850, Nancy McKibbin gave birth to the child conceived in Ireland. It was a girl and she was christened Mary Ann.

When the first census of Canada was taken, set for January 12, 1852, John B. Aylesworth, enumerator for Camden Township in the county of Lennox and Addington, listed:

NANCY McKIBENS	age 27	Roman Catholic
JAMES McKIBENS	age 9	next birthday
MARY ANN McKIBENS	age 2	next birthday

Mary Ann was to become the mother of Bertha Loucks.

* * *

How truly "Irish" were Bertha Loucks's maternal ancestors? Despite her protestation, it seems certain that most of them emigrated from Scotland to Ireland.

Bertha believed her grandmother's surname was Ferguson.

"Grandma's name might have been O'Ferguson, but we did not really know. It was claimed in the family that she (Nancy) was educated in a private school. She did not speak Gaelic. Neither did she speak with a brogue."

The Ulster Historical Foundation, in Belfast, offered strong support for their contention that the families were of Scottish descent. And, in fact, they may have properly identified the parents of both John and Nancy from the 1831 census. The secretary of the Foundation said a study of the census revealed there was one McCarty family and one McKibbin family in the Moneymore area at a time when John and Nancy would have been children.

The McCarty family lived in Ballyeglish townland and was of the Roman Catholic faith (as was Nancy). John McCarty was the head of the family which in 1831 included only two males and two females.

The McKibbin family lived in Gortnagilly townland. John McKibbin was head of the household in which there were four males and five females. Three of the family were Roman Catholic and six were Presbyterian. This supports the contention that it was the emigrant John McKibbin's mother who was the Nancy Ferguson in the ancestral line.

There were a dozen Ferguson families in the two parishes -- Artrea and Desertlyn -- all of them affiliated with the Established Church, according to Sylvia Clarke, secretary of the Ulster Historical Foundation. One of the families, consisting of three males and seven females, was living in the townland of Moneymore in 1831 with Nancy Ferguson as the head of household. It appeared, she said, that "there was a significant Nancy Ferguson in an earlier generation after whom several children would have been named."

"If Nancy (McKibbin) was a Ferguson she must have been converted to Roman Catholicism," the secretary said. "If she was a McCarty (as her son stated in Canada) she would have been born Catholic."

McCarty is an old and distinguished name in Ireland, but there is no evidence that ties Nancy to the ancient McCarty family of County Cork.

"As for the names McKibbin and Ferguson, the latter is virtually certain to be Scottish in origin," commented C. Donnelley of the Foundation. "McKibbin is probably Scots in origin being a form of McGibbon, but it occasionally derives from the Gaelic-Irish McPhilbin (according to McLysaght, the expert on Irish surnames). However, the probability is that both these families, living in the Moneymore area, were originally from Scotland."

Whatever were the ties, if any, of her McKibbin-McCarty-Ferguson ancestry to family coats of arms, Bertha Loucks was unimpressed. On this subject, her usual observation, with laughter, was:

"All my ancestors had coats and arms!"

THE TOWN OF MONEYMORE

This is Lawford Street in Moneymore, County Derry, in Ireland, whence came John and Nancy McKibbin to seek a new life in Canada, a land he did not live to see.

Community dancing parties were popular in Newburgh, Ontario, and it was at a dance that Mary Ann — usually called "Annie" — found her husband-to-be.

In what she intended to be partially in jest, she said at one of the parties, in a gay mood:

"I'll marry the first man who asks me!"

John Miles Loucks, attractive 23-year-old son of Francis Loucks, a Newburgh carpenter, stepped up and said:

"All right, then, Annie, I'm asking you right now to be my wife!"

Pleasantly surprised, Mary Ann, at 16, accepted his proposal.

John and Annie were married in Newburgh on February 28, 1867.

John, who was born in Battersea, Ontario, on January 11, 1844, was a laborer. He was employed in one of the several mills which lined the Napanee River between Newburgh and Camden East.

Their first child, Annie Amelia, was born on December 4.

Eight more children were born to the couple in the years to follow.

Bertha, the youngest daughter, was born on April 9, 1886. In later years she often recalled the happiness of her childhood days in Newburgh. She remembered how she would run to meet her father as he returned home from mill. Usually, she said, he saved something from his lunch for her -- a part of a sandwich or perhaps only a piece of bread.

Newburgh's Great Fire of 1887 became a turning point in the lives of John and Annie Loucks. The fire, which occurred on September 7, raged through the village like a firestorm in a forest. Eighty-four buildings, including nearly every shop and store in the town, were destroyed. Many homes burned, including that of John and Annie.

In 1891 Bertha began studies in the Newburgh Academy, a two-story stone structure where her older brothers and sisters had attended school. The Newburgh Academy was one of the finest schools in Upper Canada. When it was closed in 1952, it was described as being one of the oldest secondary schools in Ontario. It is believed that it was founded in 1839 in days "when lickin' and larnin' went hand in hand."

John Miles Loucks, ill of pneumonia, died on September 26, 1890. He was 46.

Their United Empire Loyalist legacy may not have been known to the children of John Miles Loucks. If known, it may not at the time have been considered significant.

Nonetheless, U. E. L. recognition is an honor in Canada and that nation has no intention of forgetting the American colonists who risked their lives and property to support George III in the Revolutionary War.

The British decree says "Those Loyalists who have adhered to the unity of the Empire, and joined the Royal Standard before the Treaty of Separation in the year 1783, and all their Children and their Descendants, by either sex, are to be distinguished" by affixing after their names the capital initials U. E., "alluding to their great principle: The Unity of the Empire."

Thus any descendant of an American colonist who supported King George in the war is eligible for membership in the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada.

The history of this Loucks family in America begins with Nicolaus Loucks, whose name in early records appears as Laux, Lauck or Laucks. He came with his wife, Anna Elisabetha, to the area of Red Hook, New York, from Germany, in 1709.

Nicolaus and Anna Elisabetha had at least four children, all born in the Red Hook or Germantown section of what now is Columbia County, New York. Abraham Loucks was born about 1712. A son, John William, was born December 30, 1715. A son, Jacob, was born in December, 1719, but he died as an infant. Their next son, also named Jacob, was baptized on April 6, 1722.

Abraham on December 23, 1732, was married in the Catskill Reformed Lutheran Church to Anna Margaretha Reiffenberger whose parents, as did Abraham's, came to New York from Germany in 1709.

Abraham and Anna had seven children: Georg (named for her father), Anna Eva, Jacob, Abraham, Elisabetha, Christina and Nicolaus (named after his father).

Jacob Loucks was baptized on May 19, 1741, in the Germantown Reformed Church. He was reared as a farm youth in the area of Kinderhook, where he and Catharina (Katreen) Fell were married circa 1759-60.

Jacob and Catharina had four children. Abraham was born on December 7, 1760. Henry was born in 1767. A daughter, Catharina (who became the wife of William Fielding), was born on June 4, 1768. George Loucks, the youngest, was born in 1770. (If there were children between Abraham and Henry it appears they died in infancy).

Jacob Loucks was content with life as a colonial farmer, living near Kinderhook when the Revolution took form. He had served in the New York Militia, but that was required. In 1777 he offered his service as a Loyalist in the army of General Burgoyne. He was assigned to the Second Battallion of Sir John Johnson's King's Royal Regiment of New York.

When the Revolution broke out, Jacob was improving a farm of 200 acres which he had obtained on a lease from John Cooper, dated in September, 1775, for twenty years at a fee of five pounds per annum. He had built a house and barn and had cleared 30 acres. He had two cows, two yoke of oxen, three young cattle and some hogs and sheep.

Abraham and his younger brothers remained with their mother and sister at Kinderhook for two years after Jacob joined the British forces. By 1777 the family was forced to flee because the men refused to serve in the rebel army. Most of the livestock and their personal goods were seized or left behind.

When they were old enough, Jacob's three sons also joined the Loyalist forces.

Jacob Loucks and his sons served in the King's Royal Regiment until the war had been decided. By this time, it was apparent the Loucks family could no longer find peaceful residence in the new nation -- the United States of America. Jacob and his sons opted for new homes in Canada, where the English king was offering free grants of lands to the Loyalists from the former colonies.

Jacob Loucks settled on 100 acres granted to him in 1784, the west half of Lot 2, Concession 1 in the Fredericksburgh Additionals. George Loucks, only 14 at the time, homesteaded the east half of the same lot. The property fronts on the Bay of Quinte and is situated a short distance west of the town of Fredericksburgh.

Canadian land records show that Jacob, in a new claim filed in Montreal on February 25, 1788, sought the full 200 acres to which he was entitled as a Loyalist.

Jacob died in Fredericksburgh on July 30, 1791, long before final action was taken on his petition.

All three of Jacob's sons on March 5, 1793, filed petitions in Adolphustown (Fredericksburgh Township) requesting Crown Land. Henry and George, although Loyalists themselves, filed as sons of a Loyalist who had not received his due.

George Loucks, 22, and Sarah (Sally) Lyons were married in St. Paul's Church at Fredericksburgh by the Rev. John Langhorn, missionary, on November 26, 1792.

Sarah Lyons was the daughter of a Loyalist, Laurence Lyons, whose widow, Susanna, became the wife of Francis Van De Bogart in Ontario. Records do not show whether or not Laurence reached Canada.

George and Sarah Loucks were the parents of eight children: John, Susanna, Mary, Katharine, Esther, Jacob, Francis and Thomas.

Francis, born in Camden of Lennox and Addington County, was baptized on February 17, 1811.

Contemplating marriage and being eligible to apply for Crown Land as the son of a United Empire Loyalist upon attaining age 21, Francis filed a petition in 1832. The grant was approved on May 8, 1833.

Francis married Deborah Wager, daughter of George and Elizabeth (Vandewater) Wager of Centreville.

When Canada took its first census in 1851 Francis and his family were residents of Portland Township, Frontenac County. They were living in a log home, as were most of the settlers in that area. Later, many built houses of stone.

Francis and Deborah had ten children, all born in Frontenac County: Elizabeth, Thomas, Margaret, John Miles (born at Battersea on January 11, 1844), Jacob, Nicolas, Lydia Rachel, Mary, William and James.

In 1861 Francis was farming in Storrington Township. However, when Newburgh's growth as an industrial community became a magnet, Francis moved his family into the village so he could more profitably pursue his skill as a carpenter.

It was in Newburgh that John Miles Loucks met and married Mary Ann McKibbin in 1867, as related earlier. Their nine children, all born in Newburgh, were: Annie Amelia, December 4, 1867; James Allen, February 4, 1869; Thressa Jane, May 20, 1871; Lillian May, May 18, 1873; Sarah Ellen, May 25, 1876; John Glenn, May 26, 1880; Winfred Stanley, April 12, 1883; Bertha Luella, April 9, 1886; and Herbert Leroy, October 13, 1889.

After the death of John Miles Loucks in 1890 — and the death seventeen days later of their 13-month-old son, Herbert — Mary Ann found it extremely difficult to support her family or keep it together in Newburgh. She made arrangements with relatives for the care of her dependent children, except Bertha. Then, in 1895, she moved to Owosso, Michigan, to be housekeeper for Edwin Switzer, widower of Mary Ann's sister-in-law, Mary (Loucks) Switzer.

Bertha attended school in Owosso and showed talent, especially in art, English composition and mathematics. But she

quit school at an early age to work and contribute towards her own support.

It was in Owosso that Bertha met Will May and later became his wife and the mother of four children.

Will and Bertha had been married for thirty years when he died on December 6, 1931. A widow at 45 — and left almost destitute — Bertha sought to battle the hardships of the Great Depression as best she could. Always a tireless worker, she took a job as a cook in a grocery-restaurant at a "salary" of three dollars per week -- half in cash and half in groceries! To earn this she went to work at 6 o'clock in the morning and, after a few hours off in the afternoon, returned to the kitchen for the supper hours . . . six and a half days each week!

On December 31, 1942, Bertha became the wife of Robert Luscombe, an employee of the City of East Lansing. When he retired they moved to Owosso where Mr. Luscombe, a native of Montcalm County, died on December 7, 1968.

Bertha lived to observe her 91st birthday anniversary, marked -- as was her 90th -- with a party, attended by her children and many of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

BERTHA L. MAY
At Age 55

On October 25, 1977, Bertha died in the same hospital where Will died in 1931. Three days later she was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in a grave next to Will's.

In accordance with her instructions the engraving on her gravestone stressed that she was a "May" despite her later marriage. The stone reads:

BERTHA L. MAY

Luscombe

1886 — 1977

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